



WILLEM BONTEKOE  
MEMORABLE DESCRIPTION OF  
THE EAST INDIAN VOYAGE  
1618—25

THE ARGONAUT SERIES

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JOURNAL  
OR  
MEMORABLE DESCRIPTION  
OF THE

EAST INDIAN VOYAGE OF WILLEM YSBRANTZ  
BONTEKOE OF HOORN,

Comprehending many wonderful and perilous happenings  
experienced therein,

Begun on the 18th of December, 1618, and completed on the  
16th November, 1625



At Hoorn Printed by Isaac Willemsz.

For Jan Jansz Deurel Book seller in the East Street in Beshams Tesament  
Anno 1646

THE ARGONAUT SERIES

EDITED BY SIR E DENISON ROSS  
AND EILEEN POWER

WILLEM YSBRANTSZ  
BONTEKOE

MEMORABLE DESCRIPTION OF  
THE EAST INDIAN VOYAGE

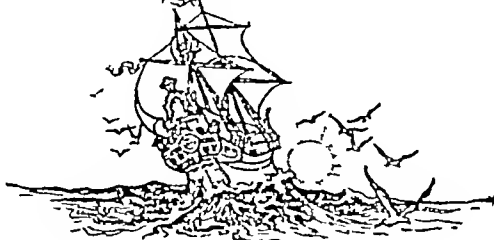
1618—25

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NEW YORK  
ROBERT M. McBRIDE & COMPANY

1929



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		PAGE
I	<i>Title Page, edition of 1646</i>	<i>Frontispiece</i>
II	<i>Willem Ysbrantsz Bonte-Koe Van Hoorn</i>	18
III	<i>"They danced and capered and rejoiced right merrily"</i>	36
IV	<i>The Shipwreck</i>	42
V	<i>"Seeing no land yet came in sight, we resolved to take them in"</i>	50
VI	<i>"There stood a great company of the inhabitants chattering most vehemently amongst themselves"</i>	60
VII	<i>"There came running from out of the woods two or three hundred men"</i>	64
VIII	<i>"Therefore I fell on my knees and prayed to God"</i>	70
IX	<i>"The hurricane continued about six or eight glasses"</i>	132
X	<i>"We were busied every day to repair our damage"</i>	138



## INTRODUCTION

BONTEKOE's East Indian Voyage was one of the most popular of the numerous adventure books in which the Dutch seventeenth century public delighted. It appeared at Hoorn in 1646, more than twenty years after the events related, in the next few years over a dozen piratical editions were brought out in various Dutch towns. All through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it continued to be reprinted. Bontekoe's name became part of the Dutch language, and "een reis van Bontekoe" is still a common expression to denote a journey with more than its due share of accidents.

Yet it is only to the discernment and perseverance of Jan Jansz Deutel, printer at Hoorn, that we owe the preservation of the Captain's great story at all. He himself, as Deutel relates in his Dedication to their Honours, the Directors of the Hoorn Chamber of the East India Company, "already seemed to have vowed it to oblivion." Deutel, who writes with a portentous solemnity, and in an elaborately classicist style, contrasting curiously with Bontekoe's downright simplicity, assures his patrons, after a dissertation on patriotism in general, that he has always been keen to make known

## INTRODUCTION

to the world the deeds accomplished by natives of the town of Hoorn. When he was permitted to read Captain Bontekoe's manuscript he at once, in spite of the Captain's modest depreciation of his own work,

"found it to be worthy to remain in eternal remembrance with us and our descendants Accordingly I begged of him that he would let me print it, but he was not inclined thereto, partly because the events were almost forgotten and grown old by time, partly because he had not described them in such a style as was, in his opinion, suitable to be printed Finally, after much amicable entreaty and insistence of some of his good friends, did he give his consent "

Indeed, Bontekoe's relation betrays the inexperienced author on every page The art of connecting his sentences, of avoiding repetitions, of delicately indicating that unimportant events later on will acquire significance, the technique of the story-teller, in short, was unknown to the man who knew all there was to be known about the art of conducting a ship and a ship's company through the awful difficulties and perils of an East Indian voyage There are many passages in the book where one is almost tempted to take the pen from the worthy Captain's clumsy hand and tell his story for him in an amended form There are other passages where one would give anything to be able to interview him so as to get hold of the really interesting details which he forgot to set down Sometimes again he is so obscure as to leave one guessing at his precise meaning

## INTRODUCTION

And yet! how gratefully should we be to Mr Deutch not only for having persuaded the ageing Carrion to let his manuscript be published, but for having refrained from doing any of the things which we may safely say we could do, but which he undoubtedly could have done, and would have spilt a lovely book in doing them. How cordially do we forgive the redundancy of his own Dedication and Preface since he has allowed Bonteloc to speak to us in his homely language unceasing.

For with all his horse-complaisance an author Bonteloc was himself by far the best possible narrator of his stupendous labours and adventures. If his book has become famous it is not only on account of the matter it has to relate. And that, once more Deutch, who was certainly not a bad judge of the work he published, will tell us why it made such an instantaneous, and such a lasting, appeal.

"'Tis just what you want", he assures the Reader in his Preface. "Here you will find no trifling, nor dreams, nor fabulous imaginings. Nor was this description made on hearsay,—no, it is based on personal experience, relating what miracles God performed by the author himself and those who were with him. For who shall not greatly marvel when reading how a man of that human kind who come so often to a sudden end—through so much peril and adversity, indeed through stresses in which to hope for any escape appeared to be like despairing, was by the Lord's mercy brought to a place of safety."



## INTRODUCTION

That was, and always will be, the chief attraction of the book: the spectacle of a human being battling against elemental forces, at tremendous odds, tenaciously holding on to dear life, and coming safely through in the end.

But it would not be so attractive, nor so moving, if Bontekoe, by the manner of his telling the story, did not reveal his own personality so completely and so engagingly. He was himself pervaded with that sense of the miraculous that communicates itself to his readers, he was sensitive both to the tragedy of disaster and to the goodness of God apparent in escape. And so he does not merely describe the external events—although he does describe them to some purpose when they have gripped his attention—but he continually notes, with the most disarming sincerity and absence of display, his own mental reactions to them.

No doubt he wants us to know that he was in the right in all his conflicts with those intolerable persons, the “Merchants”, who represented on his ship the interests and the authority of his and their “Lords and Masters”, the Directors of the Company. But how refreshing to hear him confess to “fear and trembling” whenever the occasion is such that anybody except professional heroes would succumb to human weakness of that kind. Of professional heroism there is remarkably little to be found in the book.

## INTRODUCTION

Neither in the encounters with the "Specks", nor in the miserable "war" made on the unfortunate Chinese, least of all perhaps in the terrible story of the fire, is there anything spectacular for Dutch chauvinism to feast its eyes on. Bontekoe never tries to embellish. And how charmingly he pictures himself in his relations with the men. He never pretends that his word was law with them. In fact, however pleasant the spectacle of the Captain of an East-Indiaman ruling his crew with "gentle words", and inviting their opinion before giving orders, there are occasions when by his own account Bontekoe clearly appears as somewhat deficient in strength and decision.

At the same time, it should be remembered that the system of Councils, which pervaded the whole service of the Company as it did the government of the Dutch Republic, encouraged methods of deliberation and consultation rather than of command. In a general way it may be said that the Dutch as a nation were, and are, more easily led than driven, and although I imagine that Bontekoe might on one or two occasions have been a little firmer, on the whole he seems to me in this respect to have been truly typical of the splendid class of men to which he belonged.

The important thing is that before reading very long one begins to see Bontekoe as a living man, and a

## INTRODUCTION

lovable man at that. The sense of human contact which his simple narrative conveys so strongly heightens the interest in his adventures. Admiration for the superhuman endurance of that very human person grows upon one as his misfortunes accumulate without breaking his cheerful determination to try all the resources of his technical skill and inventiveness before giving himself up for lost. Does it not amount to saying that Bontekoe possessed at least one quality of the born story-teller in a very high degree? And, indeed, however faulty his technique, it does not obscure that quality, which still works its spell triumphantly with countless readers.

Apart from the year of his birth—1587—hardly anything is known about Willem Ysbrantsz(oon) Bontekoe except what may be learnt from his journal. The second name is, of course, a patronymic, indicating that his father's Christian name was Ysbrant. It will be observed in the book that the use of patronymics was still general in early seventeenth century Holland. Third names—that is, family names—were far less common. Bontekoe's own name, which means Piebald Cow, was pretty certainly derived from a sign decorating his father's house at Hoorn; it may have been a shop or an inn. He says himself, in the course of his book, that he had never been in the Indies before he

## INTRODUCTION

went there on this voyage in command of the ill-fated *Nieuw-Hoorn*. Probably he never went again.

When he sailed from the Texel on 18th December, 1618, it was just over twenty-one years since Cornelis de Houtman had fallen into that port after having accomplished the first Dutch voyage round the Cape of Good Hope. The success of De Houtman's expedition had caused a number of companies for trading in the East to be formed in various towns of Holland and Zeeland. From 1598 to 1601 no less than fourteen fleets totalling sixty-five ships went from the Netherlands to the Indies, most of them to Java and the Moluccas, to ship pepper and spices. Some of these companies made enormous profits, but it was plain to everybody that their competition and rivalry endangered the whole of this new-born trade. Both to preserve the cheapness of the native markets and to protect the new position against the Portuguese, combination was urgently required. The government of the Dutch Republic took a hand, to bring the interested parties together. The Portuguese, whose monopoly in the Eastern world was so suddenly invaded had been, since 1580, the subjects of the King of Spain and as such at war with the United Provinces, whose independence the King of Spain still was a long way from recognising. To attack the Portuguese colonies was therefore to attack the enemy in one of the sources

## INTRODUCTION

of his wealth, and when in 1602, after negotiations under the conduct of the "Advocate" Oldenbarnevelt himself, the trading Companies were amalgamated, the States-General granted to the United Dutch East India Company a monopoly preventing all other Dutchmen from trading between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Magelhaes and at the same time delegated to it sovereign powers, which made it into an extremely powerful body for attack and conquest in the area of its monopoly.

The organisation of the Company presented clear evidence of its having sprung from the amalgamation of earlier and independent bodies. It consisted of several "Chambers", having their seats in the various trading towns which had taken part in the early voyages. The Amsterdam Chamber was the principal one, there was one in Zeeland, one in the Maas district (Rotterdam and Delft), and one in the Zuiderzee region (Hoorn and Enkhuizen). Hoorn in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was a busy shipping centre. Later, with the increasing draft of seagoing vessels, the shallowness of the Zuiderzee became an obstacle of ever more serious importance, until the town became the quiet rural market and fishing port which it is to-day.

In the first years of its existence, the Company's fleets repeatedly attacked all the main strongholds of

## INTRODUCTION

the Portuguese colonial system, Mozambique, Goa, Malacca, but all these attacks failed, and it was only on the Moluccas, coveted because only there were the precious spice grown, that the Dutch succeeded, by dint of hard fighting, in getting a foothold. On several of the islands, the Portuguese, who here had the direct support of the Spaniards from the Philippines were ousted, Dutch fortresses were built, and the population compelled to trade only with the Dutch, and on their terms. The Dutch did not only export the spice. They had managed to obtain a footing on the Coromandel coast and from there imported the widely-famed cloths into the Archipelago. It was their ambition to eliminate all other traders, native and European, and acquire a carrying monopoly in the Eastern world such as they already possessed in Europe.

They were still far removed from that ideal. At Batavia, the great commercial centre of the Archipelago, which had been their first objective because the Portuguese had no fortified post there, or near it, they still had to be content with a competitive position. And it was not only the Portuguese and the Indians themselves who competed. In the wake of the Dutch expeditions the English had followed, and their activities, both in the Moluccas, and in Java, caused not a little anxiety and resentment to the Dutch.

## INTRODUCTION

The Moluccas, precious in themselves, were too remote to serve as a centre from which to control a trading movement that already embraced the Archipelago and the Indian mainland and stretched out feelers towards China and Japan. In 1610, the Directors, realising the need for a unified and continuous command in the area of their monopoly, had instituted the office of a Governor-General, who was to be assisted by a Council. But this was an itinerant government. For several years the Governor-General and Council travelled up and down between the Moluccas and Bantam, where they could be said to be on their own territory only when they were on board ship. The need for a general *rendezvous*, a seat for the central authority, became pressing.

When Bontekoe set sail from the Texel, in December, 1618, momentous events were just taking place in the Indies. In that same year Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the most illustrious son of Bontekoe's native town, Hoorn, had received his appointment as Governor-General. He was a man of vision and determination, ruthless in his dealings with the Indian peoples, and little inclined to allow considerations of European politics to stand in the way of a struggle with the English, whose intrusion in the Archipelago he looked upon as the most serious menace to the future of the Dutch Company. In the summer of 1618 he began building a fortress at





## INTRODUCTION

consequence of Coen's policy, explains why the breakdown left it in command of the situation. Bontekoe has occasion to mention English ships as acting jointly with Dutch fleets, near the Philippines and off Macao. In fact the English were never able to pull much weight in the expeditions which were in the next few years organized by Coen's restless energy, and the instruction given to the Dutch commanders made it clear that English assistance was not really desired at Batavia.<sup>1</sup> The "Amboyna Massacre", to which there is no direct reference in Bontekoe's pages, but of which distant echoes may be heard<sup>2</sup>, was the tragic conclusion of the co-operation comedy.

After some years of rather humdrum service in the Archipelago Bontekoe was employed on one of those expeditions by which Coen hoped to extend the Company's trade, namely that which was sent in April, 1622, to attack the Portuguese fortress of Macao and to open up trade with China. The expedition, led by Cornelis Reyertsz, was a dismal failure. The attempt against Macao was given up after some operations that were severely censured by Bontekoe in a letter to Coen<sup>3</sup>. No match for the Dutch at sea, the Portuguese always offered stubborn resistance against attacks on land. Later on, under the Governor-General Van Diemen and Maetsuycker, the conquest of Ceylon, of Malacca, Negapatam and the Malabar Coast, was to

## INTRODUCTION

prove a very arduous and costly business. And Reyertsz was hardly more successful against the Chinese than he had been against the Portuguese. He came with the offer of an amicable treaty of commerce. The Chinese, however, happened to be in a far from friendly mood towards foreigners, as a result of friction with the Portuguese. Moreover, the Dutch asked for much more than permission to trade for themselves. They wanted to direct a blow against their enemies and to interrupt the profitable trade which the Portuguese from Macao and Malacca, and the Spaniards from Manilla, were still carrying on with China. They presumed to ask that no junks should trade except with their permits. And before entering into conversations with the Chinese authorities at all, Reyertsz occupied Pehu, in the Pescadores (11th July, 1622), which was Chinese territory, and fitted out the island as a naval base, building a fort on the south-western extremity. This angered the Chinese, and the proposals addressed to the authorities of the Amoy District—"the river of Chinchu" having been selected as the likeliest Chinese harbour—were met only with the urgent demand that they should evacuate Pehu. 2nd October, 1622, Reyertsz and his Council decided to make war on the Chinese, to see if thus they might not be brought to change their minds. Now began a futile and degrading "war", in which a fleet of never more than a dozen

## INTRODUCTION

ships manned by 1,000 or 1,200 men tried to harass the immense and impassive empire of China, by marauding expeditions on a few miles of coast and by burning a few villages and a few score of junks. It was made more repulsive by the demand of the authorities at Batavia for Chinese captives. Coen, his imagination aflame with the vision of a populous Batavia, that would feed trade and make remittances of money from home superfluous, was especially keen and largely responsible for the slave-raiding policy that resulted.

Bontekoe gives the facts stoically, and it is instructive to see a man, as humane as he is where his own kind is concerned, so insensitive to the sufferings of an alien race. On the one hand his laconic statement that the captives were "sold" at Batavia is apt to give a wrong impression. They were distributed among the principal Chinese already settled there, who undertook to pay a ransom of 60 reals of eight per head for them, in fifteen monthly instalments. After that they were apparently on the same footing as other Chinese colonists.<sup>\*</sup> It was a system of enforced settlement, and really a sincere compliment to the docility and industriousness of the Chinese. Yet on the other hand, the full horror of these proceedings does not appear in Bontekoe's account of them. Not many of the 1,400 captives mentioned by him as working on the Pescadores ever reached Batavia, whether to be sold or indentured.

## INTRODUCTION

One hundred and eighty, transferred to the *Haerlem* from the *Groningen*, seem to have arrived all right. But of 1,150, waiting on the Pescadores, so many died that in September, 1623, only 571 were left to be shipped to Batavia, and of these in January, 1624, no more than thirty-three disembarked alive.

Reyertsz had soon come to see that nothing could be effected by the methods adopted. The forces at his disposal were too small to make any impression on the Chinese rulers, except that the outrages committed raised their hatred and resentment. It was only his successor in the command of the expedition, however, Dr. Sonck, who took charge in August, 1624, when Bontekoe was already back at Batavia, who succeeded in making the Governor-General (De Carpentier) consent to a change of policy.

"Our proceedings on the coast of China", Sonck wrote, "have so embittered the whole of China against us that we are looked upon as no better than murderers, tyrants and pirates. Our dealings with the Chinese have indeed been very hard and cruel, and in my opinion such that the desired trade could never be obtained by them."

"It would be better had we never been on the coast of China, and I wish that Your Honours, before the departure from Batavia of the Commander Reyertsz, had been accurately informed of the power and customs of the Chinese as well as of the conditions of the country. In that case perhaps the entire empire of China, and the Emperor himself, would not have been disposed against us with hostility and revenge. Now these and many other inconveniences and

## INTRODUCTION

misfortunes will first, if possible, have to be in the aptest way eliminated, before the Company will be able to obtain the long desired fruits of that over-excellent Chinese trade”

The Pescadores were at once evacuated, and the Dutch made Taiwan on Formosa their headquarters, as the Chinese had all along urged them to do.

Of any appreciation of the wider issues of the events in which he was engaged, there is little trace in Bontekoe's account.<sup>1</sup> He had no share in the direct responsibility for them. The conduct of the expedition was entrusted to a Council of seven members, including Reyertsz, who was the President. Bontekoe was not among the number, which included only one of the Captains of ships in the fleet. One member was a Captain of soldiers, and the four remaining members were Merchants. Both the Merchants who successively served on Bontekoe's ship the *Groningen*, Bosschaert and Nieuwenroode, sat on the Council from which the Captain was excluded.

The title of Merchant indicates a rank in the official hierarchy of the Dutch East India Company. The several gradations are: Assistant, Junior Merchant, Merchant, and Senior Merchant. Above that, there are Commanders and Governors, and with them we have reached the sphere of the Governor-General's Council. The two men named were in fact Senior Merchants, and they were considerable personages.

## INTRODUCTION

The relations between the Captain of a ship and the Merchant who relied on it as a good deal more than a supercargo were difficult. Quarrels were frequent. As Bonteloc indulges in a few paltrable hints against Heyn Rol and Cornelis van Nieuwenroode, it is only fair to quote some strictures on the Captain that occur in the latter's reports to the Governor-General and Council. In the *Graafver*, he says they at one time had as much as five feet of water, "there being, through the carelessness of those who ought to have seen thereto, not a pump that could be used in the whole ship." "The *Graafver*", he adds, "is a weak ship, nor is she kept in repair as she ought to be, so that the Lords and Masters will not have service of her so long as would be proper." Having a suggestion to offer for a technical improvement (stannic cords to be used instead of ordinary ropes for anchors), he requests that this may be expressly and finally ordered, because "otherwise the Captains' pride will scarcely permit them to adopt this."

No one who has read Bonteloc's journal is likely to take the Merchant's criticisms at their face value. If it reveals anything, it certainly is neither slothfulness nor incompetence. The dogged perseverance and resourcefulness displayed on both the voyage out and the voyage home, that is what after all remains as the strongest impression of Bonteloc's journal.





*Behold here Bontekoe, on perilous voyage bent,  
By God's good care presented to all men's wonderment  
Hunger and thirst, storms, fire and sword, he did survive  
And stood i' the midst of death, the only man alive*

J J D





# Journal or Notable History of the East- Indian Voyages of Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe of Hoorn

IN the year of Our Lord 1618, the 28th December, I, William Ysbrantsz Bontekoe of Hoorn, set sail from Texel, being captain of the ship named *New-Hoorn*, manned with 206 men, of size about 1,100 tons, the wind being East

The 29th day we passed the Heads

The 30th day, in the evening, we sighted Portland, the wind still Easterly The 31st day we passed Plymouth

The 1st January 1619 we passed England's End, the wind being the same, and set our course out to sea, S W by S

The 2nd day the wind veered to S E , set our course S S W with a stiff breeze

The 3rd day the wind changed to South with a stiff breeze , set our course to W S W

The 4th day the wind came S W with increasing force, so that we were compelled to take in our top-sails. During the night the wind blew so hard that

## JOURNAL OF

we took in the foresail and lay to westward with one sail.

The 5th at night we shipped three seas, so that the upper deck was half-full of water, and the men began to cry out "We're sinking, we're sinking, the bow gun ports are open!" Hearing that I ran hastily to the fore-castle and found the portholes to be closed, where-upon I called out to them "There is no danger!" and said, "Look lively now, let a man go below to see if there may be water in the hold", which was done at once and they found no water in the hold, so I ordered them to bale out the water with leathern buckets. But the men's chests were slipping and shifting to and fro by the force of the water, so that they could hardly keep themselves on their feet to bale. So we were forced to break the chests to pieces with crowbars; then there was space to bale, and by God's help we got rid of the water. We were then drifting without sails, but the ship swung so mightily that we were compelled to put up the sail again to steady her. We lay over to westward, the weather being very intemperate, with rain, so that the sea and sky did appear as if welded together, the whole sea foaming as if it were aboil.

The 6th, 7th and 8th day it continued foul weather with rain. We saw that day many sea-fowl, which caused us to believe ourselves near the island Brazil,



## JOURNAL OF

continue our voyage. Set our course for the Canary Islands, S.S.W., the wind being about S.E. with fair weather, and the pleasantness of the weather soon put us at our ease again.

The 21<sup>st</sup> day saw a sail astern of us that did her best (as we marked, to come near us; we turned to lee and waited for her. When near us we saw it was an East Indiaman that had sailed from Zealand on the 29 Dec. 1618, some days after we sailed from Terrel. They were in good order and wanted nothing, nor had they suffered damage by the storm. The ship was named *Nieuw-Zeelandt*, the captain's name was Pieter Tijz of Amsterdam; we had good company of one another; we sailed near as fast as they though our sails were in a poor way, as related. Our course the same as before.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> day we again saw a sail on our starboard, and going near found it to be the ship *Enkhuyzen* which set sail when we did, also bound for the East Indies. The captain was named Jan Jansz of Enkhuyzen. Thus were we three ships in company, and visited one another and related to each other our adventures. Held course for the Canary Islands, which we had sight of and passed: the wind was S.E. with fair weather, we had our topsails up and looked to find the island of St. Anthony for our refreshing, yet by reason of much mist and rain could get no sight of it: therefore.

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

for certainty's sake, set our course for the island of Ile de Mayo or Ile del Foge.' Coming there about, it became calm with variable winds and we were forced to tuck before we could make it, we now got parted from our consorts since they came to the Ile de Mayo and we to the Ile del Foge, these islands lying near together

Arrived at the island we could find no anchorage, so ran close under the coast into calm water. We had brought with us from Holland a number of small masts and spars which we now got out, pushing them out backwards through the port and hauling them on deck. We sawed a spar of 14 palms through lengthwise and made two fishes and fixed them (besides two other fishes) against the mast, which made our mast as strong as it had been before. At the same time we sent our sloop to the coast to fish and being come close to the shore the Spaniards came with loaded muskets on to the beach and shot at our boat, to show they did not want our men to land, so they came back to us bringing but little fish. Meanwhile, we were busied with fixing and binding our mast. The mast being ready, we put up our top-mast again and made everything trim and shipshape, at which we all mightily rejoiced, for there our mast stood again so fine it was a pleasure to see. It was near as thick as the pillar of a church. That evening we departed

## JOURNAL OF

from the lee of the before-mentioned island and set our course to pass the Æquinoctial Line

While lying by this island there came a great shower of dust off the land, as if there had been a fire, and clung to the rigging of the ship so that it was as white as if strewn with white ashes. The next day, in the morning, when the cook had made ready the breakfast, we saw two sails behind on our lee, took in our topsails and held towards them. Being come near them, they were our two companions, to wit: the ship *Nieuw-Zeelandt* and the ship *Enkhuysen* whom we lost sight of in the night by the islands Ile de Mayo and Ile del Foge, we rejoiced greatly, visited one another on board and related our adventures. They told us how they had been on land on Ile de Mayo for their refreshing, but had found nothing and lost two of their men who were slain by the Spaniards, one of whom came from Hoorn by name Ysbrant Dirckz. The wind was S E. we kept our course for the Æquinoctial Line. Coming under the line it was calm, but at times we had great gusts of wind with rain, the wind coming from all points so that we wasted three weeks before we could cross the Æquinoctial Line. By night the sea appeared as it were all afire and foaming, it seemed as if sparks of fire shot out from the bow of the ship, but by day it ceased, this (more than common) fire of the sea did greatly astonish

all of us. Set our course to get above the Abrolhos,<sup>r</sup> having a S E. wind. Coming up to the Abrolhos the wind stilled and we feared we could not get to windward of them, yet on nearing them the wind came up, but even so we ran so near that we had sight of the outside islands, thus we came to windward of them by God's help, which rejoiced us all, for had we failed in this we should have been forced to make a long journey with the peril of having many of our men sick. We gave the men that day double ration of food and to every mess a can of Spanish wine. Set our course for the islands of Tristán d'Acunha. And after we had sailed for several days we were at the height of these same islands yet had no sight of them. The wind now being N W. we bore eastwards to make the Cape of Bonesperance [Good Hope]. After holding this course for some time we saw black-specked gulls of which occasionally we caught some, with sticks covered with a piece of fat and hooks to them, and so pulled them into the ship by way of pastime.

The sight of these said gulls is a token of the Cape of Bonesperance being near, for they followed us to the Cape. But there is a trustworthy sign that the Cape be near or that you be at the height thereof, to wit. When you shall find the compass to hold straight south and North, then look out for land. We did prove this and saw land, namely the Cape of Bonesperance,



## JOURNAL OF

yet the wind was so strong from the West that we ran with a reefed foresail and durst not attempt to land. Therefore we called the ship's council together and resolved to sail past the Cape, having all our men in good health and no want of water, so we let her go before the wind and continued our way. This was in the last of May being five months after we sailed from Holland

We kept our course along the coast to the land of Terra de Natal. In passing this coast the weather was very fair, we visited aboard one another and made good cheer. And the ship *Enkhuysen* being destined for the coast of Coromandel, she took leave of us and set another course as so to run inside the island of St. Laurentius, otherwise named Madagascar, and so further to the Mayottes to refresh themselves there; we took leave and wished one another a prosperous voyage. We and the ship *Nieuw-Zeelandt* set our course to run outside St. Laurentius, and while we sailed in company we came at times on board of one another and burned the signal light each for a night by turns; but after a time we had some dispute about setting our course and could not agree, yea, it went so far that we separated, each going the course he deemed best. *Nieuw-Zeelandt* went 2 degrees further South than we did, they had many sick men at that time

When we had sailed for a long time after we

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

separated, being at the height of 23 degrees South of the Æquinoctial Line, we had every day many who fell sick, by reason of which the officers (on the part of the common men) came into the cabin asking that we should go to the island of Madagascar for refreshing, they feared all our men would become sick, for about forty of them lay in their beds and many others did complain of being out of sorts. We therefore resolved with the whole council to hold a steady course to the island of Madagascar, to a Bay named Sancta Lucia. Coming near the coast we could see no place to bring in the ship, we put out our boat and I went with the boat well-manned to the shore the ship holding in and off near the land. Approaching the coast in the boat we found the sea beat so furiously on the shore that there was no chance to get into it, we saw many people come on the shore and one of our men sprang overboard and got to them, but he could not understand them, they waved their hands downwards as it were to say that there was a place to land. These folk, as far as we could see, had no fresh food with them, so we must needs go back empty-handed to the ship. And when we came on board (much as we hated it) without refreshments, the sick were grieved beyond measure. We resolved to go out to sea again and hold South to the height of 29 degrees, then veered and sailed East by South till we came to 17 degrees

## JOURNAL OF

South of the *Æquinoctial* Then our men again begged that we should make land to seek for refreshment, which we agreed to do seeing that every day more of our men fell sick and some died Therefore it was resolved to make for the island of Mauritius or the island of Mascarenhas<sup>r</sup> and we set our course between the two, for these islands lie near together. So we struck the East end of the island of Mascarenhas, sailing close round the corner along the shore, found 40 fathom depth close to land and cast anchor, but it was an incommodious place for the ship to lie, being too near the shore As we lay there the sick crawled out of their berths and would fain have got on land ; but the sea running very high, we were afraid to take the sick with us to land ; so we sent out the boat to examine the place and coming on land did find the dung of turtles and so returned to the ship ; the sick kept on entreating to be put on land for they smelt the air saying . “ Were we only on shore we were half cured of our sickness ”. But the Merchant Heyn Rol would on no account agree thereto , saying that the coast was there too steep, whereby we might easily drift from the land and be cut off from our folk But the men persisted and almost with clasped hands besought me to bring them on land, so that in the end I let my heart be softened and consented I went to the Merchant Heyn Rol and asked him if he would

## BONTEKOE'S EAST INDIAN VOYAGE

agree to it. But he answered, "No, not in any way." Then I said to him, "Then I will take it on myself. I will bring them on land". I went up to the men and said, "Come here, men, help one another into the boat, I will bring you on land". Then the crew helped the sick into the boat, and I ordered a sail to be given them for making a tent, also oil and vinegar, pans to cook with as well as victuals, also cooks to look after the sick and cook for them, then we went directly to the shore.

Being on land they crept together in the grass saying, "We feel better already", and looking about we found a great many doves in the trees, of those blue field-doves. They let themselves be caught by hand or killed with sticks, having no sense to fly away. We took that day about two hundred, brought them to the fire and fell a-boiling and a-roasting for the sick as well as for those in health. We found also many land-turtles, these we boiled with Damascus plums, of which we had brought plenty with us from Holland. I then returned to the ship leaving the sick (about forty in number) with the cooks on shore. Being come on board again we thought it well seeing that the ship lay in a perilous place, that I should go by night with the boat well-manned and sail along the coast to see if we could find a better roadstead to anchor the ship. Thus I did and sailed the boat close along by the land.

## JOURNAL OF

and found a good bay of sand to lay up the ship about five miles from the place where she now was. In the bay we went on shore and found there a great lake of water not quite fresh, the reason of which we judged to be that being no more than three ship's lengths from the coast the salt sea water leaked through the sand and so made the other salt as well.

Coming further inland we found great number of geese, doves, grey parrots and other birds, also many land-turtles; seeing as many as twenty to twenty-five lying in the shade of a tree, so that we could have as many as we desired. The geese were not wise enough to fly up when we pursued them, and we beat them to death with sticks without their making a motion to fly. There were also some dodos that had small wings yet could not fly, they were so fat they could scarce move and as they walked dragged their backend along the ground.

And what we most did marvel at, when we held one of the parrots and other birds and squeezed it till it screamed, there came all the others from thereabout as if they would free it and let themselves be caught as well, so we had enough of them to eat. Having seen this we returned with the boat to the ship that (as stated) was about five miles distant from that place. Being again on board we related our adventures, how we had there found a good road in a sand-bay and good

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

and safe anchorage for the ship At this they all rejoiced exceedingly , we took the boat and brought the news to our men whom we had set ashore in sight of the ship, how we should sail the ship five miles from there and then return to them , with which they were well content

Whereupon coming on board we weighed and anchored again in the above-mentioned sand-bay in thirty-five fathom and made fast both fore and aft , we let the most of our men land to seek out what they could find , and gave order for eight men to fish with the net in the inland water (which was spoken of) to see if they could get food for the crew They went to work and caught good fish, that is hard and other fish also, some of the size of salmon and a fine flavour and fat We found also fresh water a small river that came down into the sea from the mountains, the which on both sides was grown over with small trees very fair, and the water flowing between as clear as crystal , therefore we brought all our water-barrels to land and filled them from that river leaving them to stand till the time we should go aboard or such time we might think fit

Here by this water we found also a certain board<sup>r</sup> whereon was written with carved letters that Commander Ariaen Maertsz Block had been there with a fleet of thirteen sail, had there lost several

## JOURNAL OF

sloops with some of his men, since in landing they had been broken to pieces whereby some men were drowned. In the time of our stay there the sea never ran so strongly.

On this before-mentioned island of Mascarenhas there live no people. Our men wandered over the island almost from end to end and gathered what they would, feeding themselves with the birds and fish. They roasted the birds in good manner on sticks, taking the fat from turtles to smear them with, which made them so delicate it was a pleasure to eat thereof. We found also running water with great eels therein. The men took off their shirts and held them open in the flowing water so catching them in their shirts, and the taste of them was excellent.

Here we saw a thing that amazed all of us ; to wit : how the turtles came up out of the sea at morning on the shore and, scratching a hole in the sand, laid their eggs in great numbers, a hundred, nay up to two hundred, scratching sand again over the eggs, which by the sun that did shine by day with great heat, were hatched and young turtles came out from them. We looked at them with wonder for their shells were were no bigger than large nut-shells

There we found also some sugar palm trees from which we took wine as sweet to the taste as whey.

There we saw goats, but so wild we could not procure

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

any but one so old that his horns were eaten up with worms Not fit to be eaten by human beings

And while we were thus occupied each day, the sick whom we had put on land (as described) did all return to us, all in good health save seven who remained there, these we afterwards brought back in the boat to the ship

We tarred the ship within and without, setting open all the scuppers so that air would blow through, and sprinkled her in many places with vinegar, all to make a good wholesome air in the ship.

We had for our use set up a sundial on land by which we could always see what time of day it was And as we every day frequently pursued the birds, they at last came to be so fearful of us that they flew away as we approached, for which reason our chief-mate Jan Piet van Hoorn came on land with a gun to shoot some geese and other birds And after some shots, the barrel burst out of the stock of the gun so that the screw flew into his head just above the eye by which he lost his eye

At last we made our ship ready again to set sail Put up our sails, carried our water aboard and sent a drummer on shore to beat and call all our men together, we took with us in the boat about a hundred turtles to the ship We had good store of all things, turtle, birds, fish caught and dried by the men We in



the cabin had a whole barrel of geese laid in vinegar, being part-cooked, in addition also good quantity of fish laid in vinegar to preserve them. And after we had lain there twenty-one days and were got ready, we hoisted sail, crossed over keeping close to the wind, hoping to make the island of Mauritius but came to leeward of it, we had good sight of it but could not come at it. For though we lay so long at the island of Mascarenhas and had our fill of all that was on the island, yet not all our men had recovered their health, there were many who did still complain. For this reason, the officers in name of the men came to us in the cabin to ask were it not advisable to seek another place for our refreshing, because the men were not wholly recovered and we had still to go a long way South before we should come in the monsoon winds that should profit our voyage to Batavia or Bantam, so that it might prove too hard and the men again fall sick. Whereupon after a long deliberation with the ship's council, we thought good to make for the island Sancta Maria that lies close to the coast of Madagascar, before the great Bay of Antongil. Setting our course thereto we had sight of it and sailed round the West end of the island in six, seven or eight fathom of water, seeing the ground through it as clear as day and coming to the inside of the island we found anchor at twelve to thirteen fathom. The people of the country seeing

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

us, set out at once in a proa (being a small boat hewn from a tree) and came aboard us, bringing with them some apples, lemons and rice and fowls , they gave us to understand that they had more of these things on land and brought with them but a vacher By signs with their mouth they showed us very plainly they had also oxen, sheep, calves, fowls and other creatures ; they shouted moo, ba, cockadoodledo, that was cow, sheep and fowls We did much marvel at these people. We gave them wine to drink from a silver bowl, yet they had not the sense to know how to drink therefrom, but stuck their head or face in the basin and drank as does a beast from a bucket, and when the wine was in them they did bawl like as if they were mad.

These people were stark naked save for a cloth round their middle to hide their private parts , they were in colour a yellowish black

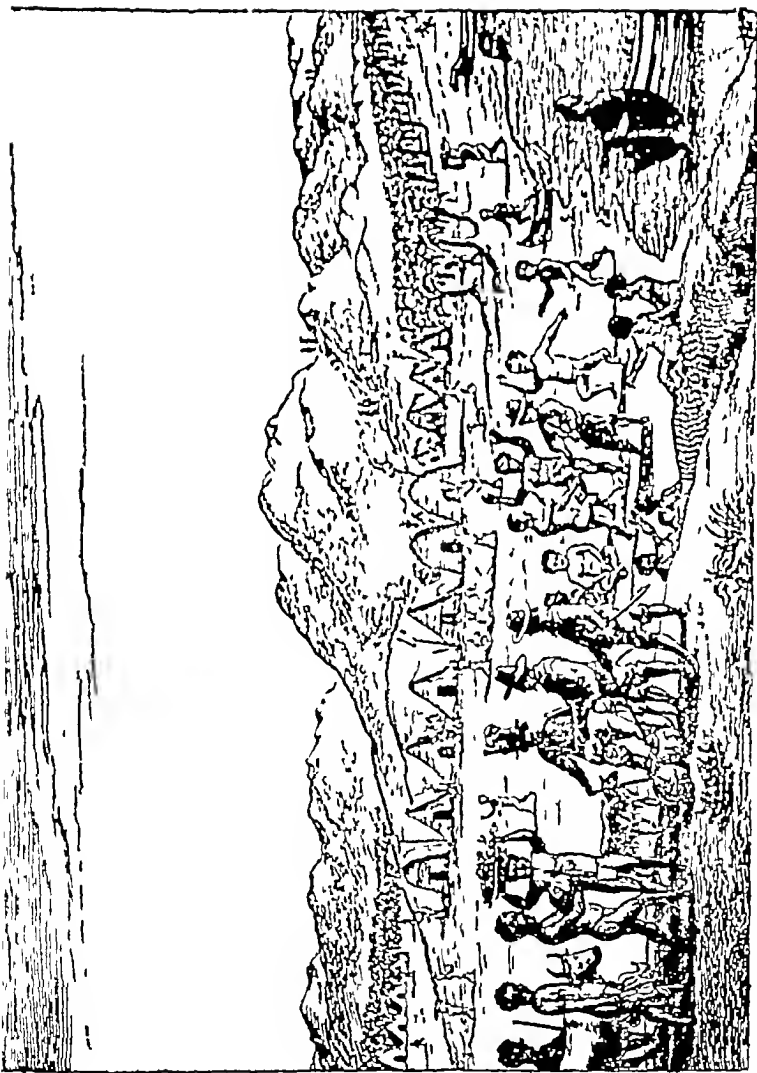
We went every day on land to barter calves, sheep, rice and milk for bells, spoons, brass-handled knives and beads

The milk they brought within leaves woven together, in form like to a cabbage From which when we came aboard we cut the leaves, and the milk flowed out Apples also and lemons we got, but of these they had but few Therefore, we resolved to sail with the ship two or three mile further, so weighed anchor and came to another place And coming on land we found

## JOURNAL OF

there also few apples, but some watermelons and Spanish bacon. We then determined that I should man the boat and go over to the land of Madagascar to see whether there I could traffic for some apples and lemons, which I did. We came to a river and rowed up it a mile or more; and we should have continued further but the trees on both sides of the river did so lean over, yea, till they touched one another, and the waterway in the river became so narrow we were forced to come back. We saw there no people at all, nor fruit, and returned therefore empty-handed. We slept one night on shore and (having been out three days) came in good safety again to the ship. Next day we went again to the island where the ship lay and there procured some more lemons, apples, milk, rice, and bananas.

During the time that we lay there all our men were cured of their sickness and became as cheerful and healthy as when we first sailed out of Holland. Going on shore we took often a musician with us who played on the fiddle, the which did much astonish the people of the country, indeed it was a thing so new to them that they could make nothing of it; they sat and stood around, snapped their fingers, danced and capered and rejoiced right merrily. We found in them no sign of any knowledge of God or any religion, but they had in some places outside their houses the heads of oxen



"They danced and capered and rejoiced right merrily



## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

fixed on poles, before which (as it seemed to us) they fell down and worshipped, this appeared mighty strange and without sense of the true God.

The 9th day that we had lain there, our men being as abovesaid, in good health and cheerful, we canted our ship as far as we could venture and cleansed it by scraping and scrubbing, and then set sail, lay to South till at the height of 33 degrees and then veered again eastwards and set our course for the Strait of Sunda. And coming at the height of 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, being that of the aforesaid Strait of Sunda,<sup>1</sup> being the 19th day of November, 1619, on that day when drawing the brandy from the cask it was set on fire. For the steward's mate going into the hold (according to custom) in the evening with his small keg to fill it in order to give out each man his measure the following morning, he took with him a candle and stuck the point of it into the wood of a cask which lay a row higher than the one he was to draw from. His keg being filled, he would draw out the candle stick and seeing that he had set it in somewhat firm he pulled it out with an effort. There was a candlewaster on the candle, it fell off and dropped into the bunghole of the cask from which he had just drawn. Thereby the brandy was set afire and flamed up out of the cask, the heads of the cask burst and the burning brandy ran down into the ship where the smith's coals lay

## JOURNAL OF

Presently there was a cry of "Fire! fire!" I was at the time lying on the poop and looked through the railing. Hearing the shouting I went swiftly down to the hold. On coming there I saw no fire and asked "Where is the fire?" They said, "Captain, look there in that cask". I put my arm down the cask and could feel no fire

The steward's mate by whom the fire was caused came from Hoorn, his name was Keelemeyn. He had two jugs of water with him, and these he had thrown on it, so that the fire seemed to be quenched. But I called for water from the deck which was brought straightway with leathern buckets and we poured till we saw no more sign of fire. We went out of the hold but in the space of half-an-hour they began again to call "Fire! fire!" at which we were all very much alarmed. On coming into the hold we saw that the fire was blazing upwards from below, for the casks stood three and four high and the fire had burned through the brandy into the smith's coal; we went to work again with leathern buckets and threw so much water it was a marvel. Now again came a new trouble, for our throwing of water into the smith's coals made such a stinking sulphurous smoke that we were like to be choked with faintness. I stayed most of the time in the hold to keep order, and caused from time to time other men to come in the hold to refresh them.

## BONTI KOL'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

I am afraid that the dead then men never got out of the hold and were sufficed to death, not being able to find the hatch. I tried at many times quite exhausted myself and laid my head on the edge to get back the way up to the hatch; at last I ran out and going up to the Merchant Heera Rol said "Master will be best to throw the gun powder overboard." But the Merchant Heera Rol could not consent to this, he said "If we throw the powder overboard we may put out the fire and coming afterwards in fight with our enemies, should we be taken (having no gun powder), how should we answer for this?"

The fire would not be put out, and no man could remain longer in the hold so the sinking mule (a decried one). We then heaved hole in the orlop deck and threw into the abyss with water, as well as through the hatch, yet it was in vain. Our longboat we had put out three weeks before this and towed it behind us, and the sail, too, that stood on the poop had been put out because it stood in the way and prevented the men forming a line with water buckets, and as there was great dismay in the ship, which may be understood (for the fire and the water was before our eyes, and no help to be expected from anyone on earth, for we were alone, no land, ship or ships to be seen), therefore many of the crew went overboard and



## JOURNAL OF

crept by stealth with their heads under the chainwales that they should not be seen, then let themselves fall into the water and swam to the yawl and longboat, they then climbed in and hid themselves under the thwarts and decks till they thought they had men enough

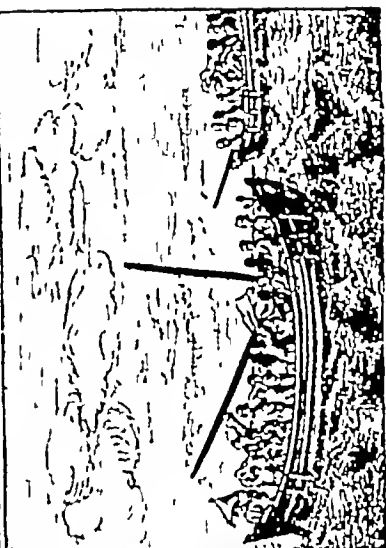
Heyn Rol, the Merchant, came by chance on to the stern walk and marvelled to see so many men in the boat and yawl. They called to Heyn Rol and said they meant to row off and if he would go with them he must let himself down by the man-rope and so come to them in the boat. Heyn Rol let himself be persuaded and climbing down the man-rope came to them in the boat. Heyn Rol said "Men, let us wait till the Captain comes", but he had no command over them, for as soon as they had Heyn Rol with them they cut the hawsers, and rowed straightway from the ship. And as I was busy with the men making shift to put out the fire wherever possible, there came other men running to me, crying out in great alarm "O! dear Captain, what must we do? The sloop and boat are gone from the ship, they are rowing off!" I said to them: "Are the boat and yawl gone? So! They have gone on such terms they shall not come back". Thereupon I ran hastily on deck and saw them rowing away. The sails of the ship at the time were lying against the mast, the mainsail was brailed up. I called

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

to the men hastily . “ Haul the sails round ! Let us see if we can overtake them and run them down The devil take them ! ” We set the sails to the wind and went after them On coming up with them, at about three ship's length athwart us they rowed across for they did not want to come to us but rowed against the wind away from the ship. Then I said “ Men, we have (next to God) no help but ourselves, as you see Let each one set to work (as well as he can) to put out the fire, go straightway to the powder store and throw the powder overboard so that the fire does not lay hold of the powder ” And this was done Then I with all the carpenters went overboard with hollow chisels and augers to bore holes in the ship, our purpose being to let a fathom or so of water into the ship so as to smother the fire from below , but we could not get through the ship because there was so much ironwork in the way In short, the terror was that in the ship is beyond my power to express the groans and screams were fearful beyond measure Now again we courageously fell to throwing of water, by which the fire did seem to abate, but a short time after the fire came into the oil, then our courage was lost entirely, for the more water we threw, the worse the fire seemed to become, so high did it flame up through the oil Then there arose such crying, groaning and shrieking in the ship as caused a man's hair to rise on his head,

yea, the vehemence of fear and terror was so great that cold sweat poured from men's faces, yet we did continue to pour on water and throw powder overboard until the end when the fire laid hold of the powder. About sixty half casks of powder we had thrown overboard, yet had in the ship still about three hundred with which we blew up every man of us. The ship burst into a hundred thousand pieces, 119 persons were in the ship when it was blown up.

I stood then when it came to pass, near the main gangway up on deck and about sixty persons who were handing the waterbuckets stood right in front of the main mast, these were all carried off together and shivered to bits till you could not see where the pieces were of one man or another. And I, Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, at that time captain, was blown up with them into the air, I know no better than that I should die there with them. I raised my hands and arms to Heaven and cried: "There I go, O Lord! be merciful to me, poor sinner!" I believed this to be my death, yet in being blown up I retained my understanding, and did feel a lightness in my heart that seemed to be mingled with a certain cheerfulness and I came down again into the water among the boards and fragments of the ship that was all to pieces. Lying in the water I received such new courage as if I had been a new man. And looking round I perceived the mainmast to lie





## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

on my one side and the foremast on the other. I climbed into the mainmast and laid myself down thereon and took a view of what was done and said " O God, see how this beautiful ship is destroyed, like Sodom and Gomorrah "

Lying thus I saw no living creature whatsoever way I looked, and while I lay in thought, there a young man did bubble up beside me, beating with hands and feet and he got hold of the point of the prow (that had drifted up again) saying . " I am all right ". Then I looked round and said " O God, is there still a man alive ? " This young man was named Harmen van Kniphuysen, from the Eider region ' I saw near him a spar or yard floating and because the mainmast (on which I lay) rolled continually from side to side so that I could not well remain on it, I said to him . " Push that spar towards me, I will lie on it, then pull me to you and we can sit together ". This he did and I came to him. The reason why I could not otherwise have come to him was that in being blown up I was sorely hit My back was much hurt, I had two holes in my head, nay, it was so bad that I thought, " O Lord ! in a little while I shall be dead ". Yea, it seemed that my sight and hearing were going. We sat here side by side each with his arm round a rib of the ship's forepart We stood up and looked out for the longboat and yawl , and at last had sight of them

## JOURNAL OF

but they were so far off that we could hardly see if it were the head or the stern that faced us. The sun was come down to the water ready to set. I said to my comrade. "Harmen, it seems that our hope is lost, for it is late, the sun goes down, the boat and sloop are so far we can scarce see them, the ship is gone to pieces and we cannot endure long on the wreck; therefore let us pray God Almighty to deliver us". We did so and prayed God earnestly for deliverance, which was sent us, for as we again raised our eyes, there were the sloop with the boat nigh us at which we rejoiced exceedingly. And straightway I called out: "Save the Captain! save the Captain!" Hearing which they were glad and cried "The Captain is still alive! the Captain is still alive!" and then rowed near to the wreck and lay there both yawl and boat, they dared not come close for they feared a piece of the wreck might cut through the yawl or boat. The young man Harmen van Kniphuysen had still enough spirit to jump from the wreck and swim to the boat. He had not suffered much injury from the blowing up, but I called out "If you want me you must fetch me, for I am so hurt that I cannot swim" Then the trumpeter sprang out of the boat with a sounding line (which they still had) and brought me the end. I made it fast round my middle and they pulled me to the boat, and so I came (the Lord be praised!) into

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

the boat    Being in the boat I came aft beside Heyn Rol, Willem van Galen and the second-mate, named Meyndert Krijnsz, of Hoorn, who marvelled greatly that I was still alive    I had caused a little deckhouse to be made in the stern of the boat—right across it—that might hold two men ; I crept therein and thought I must take counsel with myself, for I surmised I had not long to live through the blow on my back and the two holes in my head , but nevertheless I said to Heyn Rol and the others    “ Stay this night by the wreck, to-morrow when it is day we shall salve some victuals, and mayhap find a compass to help us find land ”    For in the yawl and boat there was neither compass or chart or sextant, nor scarce any food or drink , with such haste had they left the ship    In fact, they said that the chief mate, Jan Piet, of Hoorn, had taken the compass from the binnacle , it seemed he feared already that they might leave the ship, which they did in spite of his precaution

Now while I lay in that hole or deckhouse, the Merchant told the men to put out the oars and set them to rowing, for all the world as if he thought to have land when it was day    But when day was come we had lost the wreck no less thoroughly than the land    They were sore dismayed, and came to look in the hole where I lay whether I were alive or not, and seeing me still alive they spoke , “ Oh, dear, Captain ! What



## JOURNAL OF

shall we do ? We have lost the wreck and see no land, we have neither food or drink, nor sextant nor chart nor compass ! What counsel do you give ? ” Thereupon I said . “ Men, I ought to have been hearkened to when I said last night that you should stay by the wreck at night, so that we might get victuals, for the meat and bacon and cheese floated about my legs that I could scarce move through them ”. They said . “ Dear Captain, come out to us ”. I said “ I am so lame that I can hardly move , if you want me to come out you must help me ” They then came and helped me out and I sat down, looked over the men and they were rowing. I asked forthwith . “ Men, how much food is there in the boat ? ” And they brought about seven or eight pounds of bread for the whole company , we had two empty barrels and we laid the bread therein I said further . “ Men, pull in your oars, you must do otherwise, for you will be spent with fatigue and we have no food to give Pull in your oars ” Then they said . “ What must we do then ? ” But I said “ Take off your shirts and make sails thereof ” They said . “ We have no sail-thread ”. I said : “ Take the buffer-pads from the boat and pluck them loose and twist them into sail thread, from the rest make matting for sheet and gaff ” Thereupon every man of them took off his shirt, and they tacked them together for sails, and those in the yawl did the same I then

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

counted our men and found in the longboat forty-six and in the yawl twenty-six persons, thus together seventy-two

There was a blue reefer coat and a cushion in the boat, these were given to me. The reefer I put on and placed the cushion on my head, for (as I related) I had two holes in my head. The barber we had with us in the boat, but he had no medicaments, so he chewed some bread and laid it therewith on the wounds, by which (with God's favour) I was cured, I also offered to take off my shirt but they would not allow of this, they had care for me to keep me alive. We let ourselves drift the whole day, being busied meanwhile to make the sails. By evening they were ready, we set them up and began to sail. This was the 20th day of November, 1619. We then began to set our course by the stars, for we knew well enough where the stars should rise and set, so we set our course in the night time.

By night the cold was so great that the men's teeth chattered, yet by day so hot that one felt like dying of heat, for the sun was mostly right overhead. The 21st, 22nd and 23rd November we put together a sextant to take our height, cast a quadrant on the quarter deck and drew a stick with a cross piece therefrom. We had the coffin-maker, Teunis Sybrantsz, of Hoorn, in the boat, he had a pair of compasses. He

## JOURNAL OF

also had some knowledge of drawing a stick so that together in that way we made and shaped a sextant, with which we shot the sun. I also cut a sea-chart on the board aft and laid the island of Sumatra therein, with the island of Java and the Strait of Sunda that runs in between the two islands. And that same day wherein we lost the ship, in the afternoon I had taken the height of the sun and found  $5\frac{1}{2}$  degrees South of the *Æquinoctial Line*, and the specification on the chart showed about ninety miles from land. I also cut a compass therein, and measured each day with a pair of compasses by guesswork and set the course seventy miles to the side or above the hole, so as the better to know what direction we must take if we saw land. We sailed thus by the shooting with our sextant and by our measuring.

From the seven or eight pounds of bread I gave each man every day his portion so long as it might last, but it was soon finished. Each man had every day a piece the size of a finger-joint. We had no drink, therefore when it rained we took down our sails and spread them across the boat and caught up the water on the sail and stored it in our two barrels, and when these were filled we put them aside for a day when it was dry and no rain fell. I cut off the toe of a shoe and each man came to the barrel and filled it and drank and returned to the place where he had sat. And although we were

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

in such distress, the men said - " Captain, take as much as you will, for in any case it is not enough for all of us " Seeing their courtesy, I would not have more than they did - Sailing in this manner with yawl and boat and because the boat sailed faster than yawl and seeing there was no man in the yawl who had knowledge of navigation, therefore those who were in the yawl (when they came near to us) entreated that they might come over into the boat and said " Dear Captain, take us over so that we may be together " They feared they might drift away from us - But the men in the boat were against this and said " Captain, should we take them over, we'd all be done for, for the boat cannot carry all the men " So they were forced to keep off the boat

The distress among us was great, we had no more bread and could see no land - I continually made the men believe that we were near land, so they should keep of good courage, but they began to murmur against it among themselves and said one to another " The Captain may say we are sailing towards land, but maybe we are sailing away from land "

On a certain day (when it seemed that we could endure no longer without food) God Almighty sent sea-gulls to fly over the boat, verily as if they desired to be caught, for they flew almost into our hands, letting themselves be caught - We plucked off their

## JOURNAL OF

feathers and cut them into small pieces and gave some to each man, we ate them raw and it tasted to me as good as any food that ever I did eat in my life, yea, it tasted as sweet honey in my mouth and throat. Had there only been more of it, it was just enough or hardly so much as to keep us alive, and no more.

And seeing that no land yet came in sight we became so disheartened that the men resolved (when those on the yawl again begged they might come to us) to take them in, for as there came no deliverance by land we feared that we must die of hunger and thirst, and if we must die then we resolved rather to die all of us together. We then took over the men from the yawl into the boat and took all the oars out of the yawl with the sails, and placed them in the boat. We had then in the boat a sprit-sail, foresail, mainsail and mizzen-sail. We had also about thirty oars, we laid them across the thwarts as an orlop. The boat was so deep that the men could sit comfortably on their bottoms under the oars, so we set one-half of the men beneath the oars and the other half above the oars and could thus dispose the men conveniently. We were then seventy-two persons in the boat, and looked upon one another most woefully, having neither food or drink. There was now no more bread, nor did the sea-gulls come any more and it would rain no more.

Now when there seemed again the poorest prospect



"Seeing no land yet came in sight, we

resolved to take them in



## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

of keeping our lives, all unforeseen there came (by the Lord's mercy) bursting up out of the sea a school of flying fishes about the size of a large smelt, like a flock of sparrows they flew into the boat. Then there was a general grabbing and snatching, each doing his utmost to catch them. We divided them among us and ate them raw, they tasted sweet as honey, but they did not carry us very far. It refreshed us more or less and prevented (by God's help) that any of us died, which was a marvel, for the men were already beginning to drink sea-water in spite of my warnings. I said to them. "Men, drink no salt water for it will not cure your thirst, you will get dysentery therefrom and die." Others chewed shot and musket-balls, others drank their own urine. I drank my own urine as long as it was good, but it became later unsuitable for drinking.

Our distress became every day greater and heavier to bear, and the men began to look with such despair, distrust and malevolence at one another as if almost they would devour each other, verily they did speak of it among themselves, deeming fit to eat first the boys, and when these were finished, they should draw lots who should be the next one, I was sore troubled at this and in great distress of mind prayed to God Almighty that in his Fatherly compassion he would have mercy and not let it come to this, that he would not afflict us beyond our endurance, knowing the



## JOURNAL OF

weakness of his creatures I cannot express how the fear of this proposal did oppress me, the more because (so I judged) I saw some who would have begun to kill the boys, yet (with God's help) I dissuaded them, praying for the boys and said "Men, let us not do this thing God will deliver us, for we cannot be far from land, as shown by our daily measurements and shooting" They answered "You have told us that many times, yet we find no land, yea, maybe we are sailing away from the land", they being much dissatisfied Whereat they fixed with me the time of three days, after which if we came not in sight of land, the boys should be eaten Truly a desperate resolve ! So I prayed to God most fervently to look graciously upon us and bring us before that time to land, that we might commit no abominations before His eyes The time passed and our distress was so great that we could bear it no longer We thought many times were we but on land, it would not matter if we might eat nothing but grass I diverted the men with such comfortable counsel as I could at that time call to mind I said they must be of good courage, that the Lord would provide, but I myself was but fainthearted, would give comfort to others yet was myself in need to be comforted I spoke many words that my heart misgave me We endured and suffered thus together and became so faint and feeble that we had scarce

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

Strength to stand. Hev'n Rol, the Merchant, had come to such a pass that where he sat there he stuck and could come no further. I had so much energy left that I could move from one end of the boat to the other. We drifted thus as God directed till the second day of December, 1619, being the thirteenth day of our losing the ship. It was then a clouded day with rain and calm, we loosened the sails, spread them across the boat and crept all together under the sails and filled our barrels full of water. The men had very little clothing by their setting out with such haste and their shirts were made into sails, as before related, most of the men had no more on than a linen drawers and the upper part of them bare. They crept in this way together under the sail (to get warmth) and I stood at the time at the rudder and did surmise we were nearing land. I hoped it would clear while I stood at the helm, but it continued misty. I became so cold through the fog and damp in the air that I could keep no hold on the rudder any longer therefore called to one of the quartermasters and said "Come and relieve me of the helm, for I can hold out no longer." Then came the quartermaster and relieved me and I crept under to the men to gain warmth.

The quartermaster had not stood an hour at the helm when the mist began to clear and he looked and forthwith he saw land. He cried out with great

## JOURNAL OF

rejoicing . “ Come out men, there is land, just in front of us ! Land ! Oh. Land ! ” You should have seen with what speed we came out from under the sail. We set up the sails again and sailed to the land , we came that same day to land. God Almighty be praised, who thus answered our prayers and entreaties ; for we prayed morning and evening with fervent worship of God and sang a psalm before and after our prayer, for we had a few psalmbooks with us . Most of the time I had acted as clerk, but later when the reader came out of the yawl into our boat he did it himself.

On coming to the land, the sea ran so high on to the shore that we dared not land, but we found on the inside of the island (for island it was) an inlet ; there we let fall the grapnel and having another one we set it on to the land so that the boat was moored head and stern, and we sprang (as well as we were able) all men on shore, going each his way to forage. But as soon as I was on land I fell on my knees, kissing the earth with joy and thanking God for His mercy and compassion that He had not tried us but thus far helped us out ; for this day was the last of those after which the men had resolved to attack the boys and eat them. By this was shown that the Lord was the best Steersman Who did guide and steer us till we made the land, as I have related.

We found on this island abundance of coco-nuts,

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

but could not find (what we sought) fresh water , we satisfied ourselves therefore with the sap of the young coco-nuts which was a good drink. And we ate of the old nuts that had become hard , thus we did too eagerly, without forethought, for the same night we all fell grievously sick with such distressful pain and cramps in the stomach and belly that we were like to burst. We crept together in the sand, each one groaning his hardest , after that purging of the bowels did begin to work, by which we felt immediate relief , the next day we were recovered and almost made the round of the island. We found there no people, but did see signs of people having been there. Here was no other thing to eat save coco-nuts. Our men told me they had sight of a snake that was as much as a fathom thick, but I saw it not myself.

This island lies about fourteen to fifteen miles from the coast of Sumatra. We brought as many coco-nuts as we could into the boat for provision, the old nuts to eat and the young ones to drink from. At evening we weighed and went off from the island to the coast of Sumatra , the following day we had sight of it. We came near, kept in along the shore with the wind behind us, held East until the nuts were finished. Then the men desired again to go on land , we sailed close along the breakers on the coast, but found no place to land because the sea ran so high.

## JOURNAL OF

Then we resolved that four or five men should spring overboard and see if they could swim through the surf to land and walk along the shore and see if they could not see any opening to come in with the boat Which was done. They sprang overboard, pushed through the breakers to land and walked along the shore, and we sailed with the boat near the coast.

At last they found a river And they took off their hose and waved to us that we should come in there Seeing which we sailed directly thereto Being come, there lay a bank right before the mouth of the river on which the seas beat with such force that I said, "Men, I shall not go in here, save with the consent of every man, for should the boat capsize you shall not reproach me with it". And being asked, every man in his turn, what they said, they answered, Yea, they would venture it Then I said. "I venture my life with yours". I hastily gave order that at the stern of the boat they should put out an oar on each side and two men at each oar I stood at the helm to keep the boat straight ahead In this way we went into the breakers. The first sea that came plunged the boat half full of water. I called out "Bale out, men! Bale out!" And they baled, with hats and shoes and with the empty barrels we had in the boat, and threw most of the water out Then came the next sea, this threw the boat full of water almost up to the thwarts, whereby she

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

lay so vilely as if ready to sink. And I called to them .  
“Men, hold straight, hold straight ! Bale out, bale out, or we are all dead men ” We drove straight before the sea and baled out all the water we could. Then came the third sea and that fell short of us so that we took in but little water and then it was at once calm water. So with God's help we came through. We tasted the water and it was already fresh, at which we all rejoiced exceedingly, and we moored the boat to the land on the right-hand side of the river. Coming on to the land it was overgrown with long grass and looking round we saw beans among the grass like to the Eider beans. Then all men sought for them and ate them. I myself did my best, thinking “ I had better try to get my share ”, and our men walked a little beyond. There they found a fire with some tobacco lying beside it, at which we rejoiced greatly. It seemed that people of the country had been there, kindled fire and having smoked tobacco had left some of it lying either by accident or on purpose. We had two axes in the boat, with these we hacked down trees and cut off the branches, and made fires in five or six places. There our men in companies of ten or twelve stood or sat around and smoked tobacco. When it was evening we made blazing fires and set a watch in three places for fear of the inhabitants of the country, for there was no moon.

## JOURNAL OF

Now that same night we became so ill from the beans which we had eaten that we were like to burst with the pain and cramps in our bellies (the same as overtook us before with the coco-nuts) And while we were lamenting, the inhabitants of the land came with intent to slay us all, as I shall hereafter describe. The watch we had set became aware of them just in time and came to us and said . “ Men, what shall we do ? Here they come ! ” We had no arms but two axes and one rusty sword, and, moreover, we were ill (as related) from the beans We resolved however, not to let ourselves be slain so easily, and taking up burning faggots in our hands, we set off towards them in the dark : the sparks of fire flew out over the ground which in the darkness was terrible to behold Besides they knew not if we were armed or not They took flight away from us, behind the woods, and we returned again to our fires, and remained so the whole night in fear and alarm sitting and standing by the fire, but I and the Merchant Heyn Rol went into the boat, not trusting ourselves on the land

In the morning when it was day and the sun had risen, there came three of the inhabitants out of the woods on to the beach We sent to them three of our men who could speak some Malay for they had been in the East Indies before and partly learned the speech And being come to them the three inhabitants asked

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

them what people we were, and they said “ We are Hollanders who by misfortune of fire have lost our ship and are come here to trade for refreshments if you have such ” They answered they had fowls and rice, which we greatly desired. Then they came to us near the boat and asked if we also had arms We gave answer “ Yea, plenty of arms, muskets, powder and shot ” I had the sails put over the boat so that they could not see what was within Then they brought us rice, that was boiled, and several fowls. We inquired of one another what money we had and put it together One brought out five, another six, another twelve, some more, some less, reales of eight, so that altogether we had about eighty reales of eight, from which money we paid for the fowls and rice they brought us Having these I said to the men . “ Now men, sit down together and let us first eat our bellyful and then see how it is ” The which we did The meal being finished we consulted what was to be done in order to supply ourselves with what was needful And as we were not sure of our latitude, we inquired of them the name of their country, but could not understand it clearly, but thought it to be Sumatra They waved their hands downwards that Java lay there and named Jan Coen, that he was our Chief there in Java , which was true, for Jan Pieterszoon Coen, of Hoorn, was at that time General<sup>1</sup>, so that we then partly knew our bearings and



## JOURNAL OF

conjectured that we were to the windward of Java ; for we had no compass and had always been in doubt if our measurements were secure ; we were thereby greatly assured of our reckoning

But as we needed more victuals to continue our voyage, we resolved that I with four of the men in a proa should go up the river to the village that lay a way up, and with the money we had, buy victuals there as much as we could procure Which I did and we went up the river.

Being come into the village we bought rice and fowls, which we sent to the boat to Heyn Rol the Merchant, giving order that each should have his portion so there should be no quarrelling, and I with the four men in the village then had two or three fowls boiled with some rice ; we sat down together and ate as much as we would There was drink too, which they take out of the trees, it is so strong that a man may well become drunk by it. We drank thereof with each other, after we had eaten While we ate, the people of the town sat round about us and looked upon every bite we took.

After our meal I bought a buffalo for 5½ pieces of eight, but the buffalo being paid for we could not get hold of him because of his great wildness , did thereby lose much time, and it growing late in the day, I would return to the boat with the four men the buffalo, so I





BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE  
thought, we could catch the following day. But hereover the four men did beg me to allow they might stay there that night, saying that at night when the beast lay down they would secure him. Although I did advise against this, at last by their continued insistence I yielded. I took leave of them and we wished one another good-night.

Coming to the side of the river where the proa lay, there stood a great company of the inhabitants chattering most vehemently amongst themselves. It looked as if some would have that I should go, others not. I seized one or two from their number by the arm and pushed them to the proa to row, just as if I still was master, whereas I was but half servant. They looked most frightful bullies, yet let themselves be commanded and two went with me into the proa. The one sat fore, the other aft, each with a paddle in the hand and pushed off. They had each a kriss stuck in their side, being a weapon like a poniard with a grained blade.

When we had gone some distance, the one from behind came to me, for I sat in the middle of the prow, and signed he would have money. I felt in my inner pocket and took out a "kwartje" and gave it to him. He stood and looked at it, not knowing what to do, then he took it and folded it into the cloth he had round his middle. The front man seeing his

## JOURNAL OF

fellow had received something. came also to me and showed that he too would have something. Seeing which I again took a "kwartje" from my pocket and gave it to him. He stood and looked at it also, it seemed as if he were in doubt to take the money or to attack me, which they could easily have done for I was unarmed and they had (as described) each a kris in his belt.

There I sat like a sheep between two wolves, in a thousand fears, God knows what I felt. We were going with the stream (for there was a strong current) About half-way (to the boat) they fell to jabbering and shouting, by all signs it seemed that they meant to make an end of me. Perceiving this I was so fearful that my heart quaked and trembled with fear; therefore I turned to God and prayed for mercy, and that He would give me understanding what were best for me to do in this situation. And it seemed that a voice within me said I should sing, which I did although I was in such distress; and I sang so that the trees and woods were filled with the sound, for the river on both sides was grown with high trees. And when they saw and heard that I thus began to sing they began to laugh and gaped till you could see down their throats, and it appeared they thought I did not fear them, yet in my heart it was far otherwise than I trust they thought.

In this wise I proved indeed that a man can sing even

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

from fear and anxiety, and herewith we came so far that I saw the boat where it lay. Then I stood up and waved to our men (who stood by the boat). On being aware of men, they came hastily along the river bank and I signed to the two who had brought me they should bring the proa to land, which they did, and I signed they should go before me, for I thought, "So doing at least you shall not stab me from behind." Thus I came again to our company.

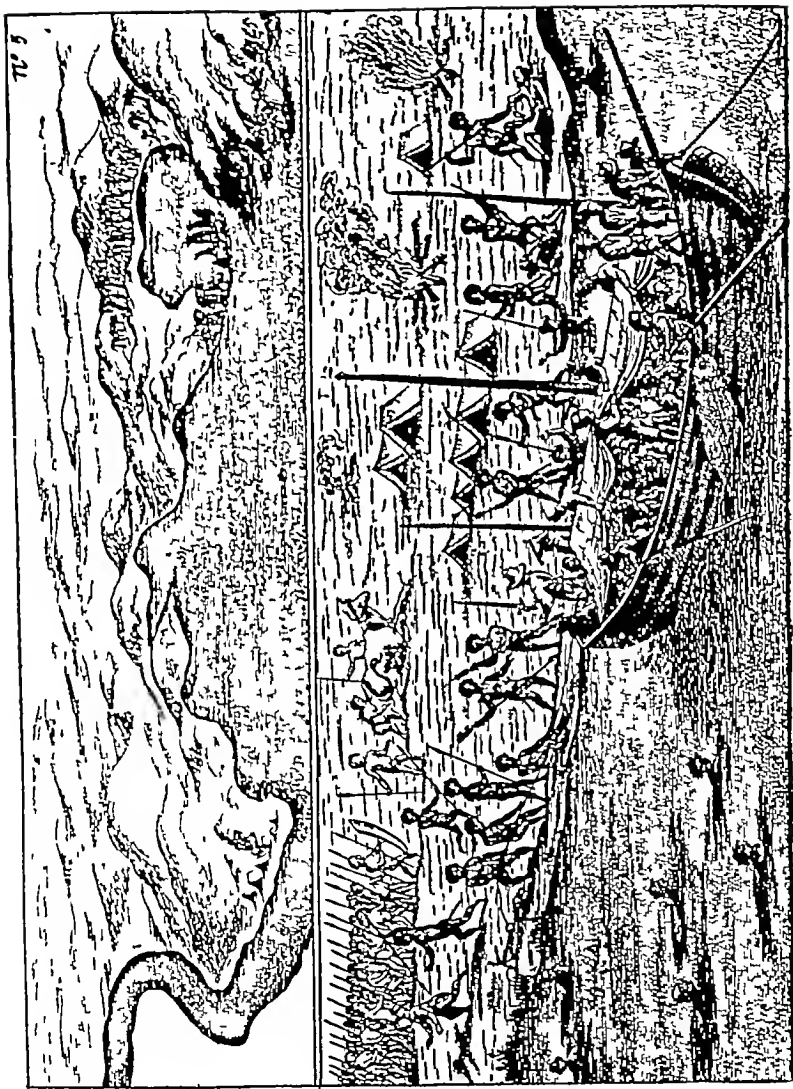
HAVING (by God's grace) escaped these perils and terrors, when we were come to the boat, the two inhabitants asked where our men slept. We answered, "Under those tents", for our men had made tents of branches into which they crept. They asked also where I and Heyn Rol, the merchant slept, we said "In the boat under the sail." They then returned to the village. I thereupon related to Heyn Rol and the other men how I had fared and that I had bought a buffalo in the town which we could not lay hold of that evening, and the four men whom I had taken with me had begged they might abide there the night so they could take the beast when he lay down and bring him aboard, to which after their long insistence I gave consent, with the understanding they should return to us with the beast, early to-morrow morning.

Having related this and more of our happenings, we all lay down to sleep for the night. In the morning

## JOURNAL OF

when it was day, yes, even when the sun had risen a good way, we had no sight of either man or beast. Thereupon we fell in doubt that all might not be well with our four comrades, and after some more time of waiting we saw two of the inhabitants coming towards us driving a beast before them. When they were come to us, and I saw the beast, I said it was not the same that I had bought and paid for. Our steward could understand them in part, he asked them why they had not brought the same beast which I bought and also where our men were (that is the four who men went with me to the village). They answered that they could not lay hold of that beast and that our men were coming with another, by this we were partly satisfied. And because this beast which was brought by the two blacks was so unruly and sprang wildly, I said to Willem van Galen, the sergeant. "Take the axe in your hand and hamstring the beast so that he does not escape us, for we can suffer no loss." The which he did, he took the axe and hamstrung it so that it fell to the ground.

Then these two blacks set up a marvellous crying and screaming, at which there came running from out of the woods two or three hundred men (or thereabouts with intent to cut us off from the boat and slay us all together; but we were warned in time by three of our company who had been lighting a fire a space beyond



"There came running from out of the woods two or three hundred men "







## JOURNAL OF

grapnel rope off ", and he cut, he cut, but it would not break. Seeing which I went aft, took the rope and laid it flat on the stern and I said " Now cut it ", and he cut it off at once. Then our men at the head of the boat near the grapnel rope pulled the boat out to sea. The blacks came after us into the water, but the coast here being very steep they were soon off the ground and had to leave us ; we fished up our men who had swum in the river and hauled them into the boat. Hardly were the men in the boat when God Almighty caused wind to come suddenly from the land, which up to that time had blown from the sea. Verily a marvellous sign of God's merciful hand. We hoisted our sails and sailed straight out of the inlet in one tack against the high breakers and this time got over the bank (on which we had been in such peril on coming in, as related) so that but little water came into the boat.

The blacks or inhabitants of the country did not think we should be able to come out and they ran on to the point of land with intent to take us there and kill us ; but it seemed that such was not the will of God, for the boat rode high and straight and sprang up against the sea , in this way by God's help we got out of the inlet. When we were outside, the balcer (who had fought so well with the sword) became all blue in the face, for he had been wounded in the belly right above his navel and the weapon was poisoned,

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

by which the wound was blue all round it , this I cut out to prevent that the poison should spread, but it was in vain, he died before our eyes Being dead we put him overboard and let him float. Then we took count of our men and found that we had lost sixteen of our company, to wit, eleven they had slain on shore, and the baker we had laid overboard, and the other four men who had stayed in the town At this we all together were sorely grieved and did lament then, but nevertheless thanked the Lord that we were not all slain in that place

For my own part I judged that next to God, those four men who stayed in the town had saved my life, for if they had come with me to the boat when I went away, so they (to wit the blacks) would have slain all five of us, so I verily believe , for when I stood on the side of the river with that big crowd they disputed together (as related) as to my going away, but I made signs to shew that the following day I should come to them with all my men Then it appeared they thought “ Let us make no trouble, we shall then be able to cut them down and kill them with little trouble ”. They believed that I should not abandon my four men, and looked upon them as sufficient surety, yet they were out in their reckoning However, it was a pitiful business that we were forced to leave our men there, but I surmise that they had already slain them

## JOURNAL OF

We set our course and sailed before the wind along the coast. We had still eight fowls and a small store of rice in the boat, and that for fifty-six persons which we then were. Verily, but a small portion for so many men! We divided it and gave each his share. These victuals spent, we consulted together that it were best to seek land again, seeing we had already great hunger and in the sea we could get nothing at that time to feed on. We therefore turned again towards land, and seeing a bay we sailed into it. We saw on the shore before us many people standing together, and went towards them, but they did not wait for us but ran away. We found there no victuals, but there was fresh water, of which we drank as much as we would: filled up our two barrels with it, and took the boat round the cliffs. There we found small oysters and winkles; and each one gathered his pocketful. At the place where we lost our four men, I had bought a hatful of pepper, which was now a good seasoning to the oysters and warmed our stomachs mightily.

We sailed again out of the bay and stood out to sea to continue our voyage. Being still not far from the land we fell into a storm of wind so that we were forced to take down our sails, these we furled across the boat and crept everyman under sails and let ourselves drift at God's mercy till some two hours before day, then the wind lessened and we had again fair weather. We

## BONTEKOE'S EAST INDIAN VOYAGE

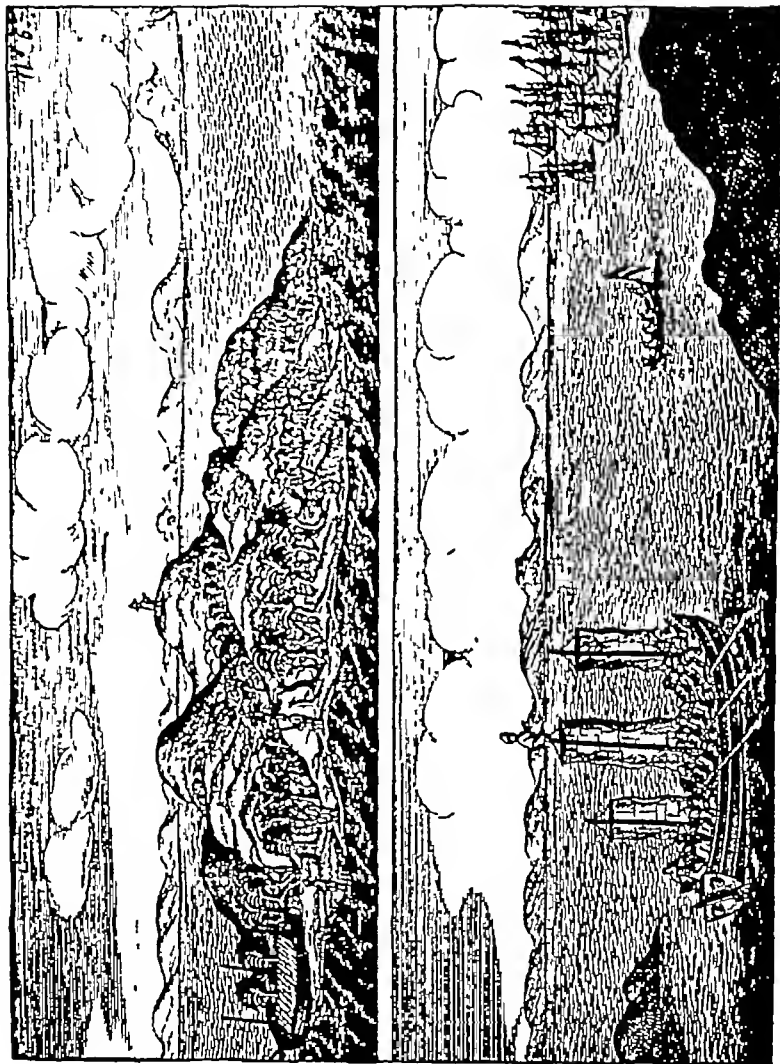
then came up and hoisted our sails again We then met a headwind and tacked away from the shore It seemed that God would preserve us from greater danger, for had we not encountered this storm and contrary wind we should have held along the coast and likely enough run into the watering-place which lay near to, in Sumatra, where our nation was used to land, and here they were now bitter enemies to the Hollanders for shortly before this time many Hollanders had been slain on going in for water. Now when day was come we saw three islands lying ahead of us, we resolved to sail thither, thinking there were no people thereon, but we had hope to find something to refresh ourselves, we came there that same day There we found at once fresh water and saw great reeds growing as thick as a man's leg, these we cut down with our axes These reeds are named bamboos We pierced through the joints with a stick all save the lowest joint, we poured water into these and put stoppers on and by these means we got as much as two tons of fresh water into the boat We found also palm trees which in their tops were so tender as it were the pith of rushes, these we also cut down and took with us such as were good for victuals Our men wandered through all the island foraging, yet could find nought else of any worth

I went apart from the men and seeing a hill (the

## JOURNAL OF

highest in the island) I went up and looked all round, being sore oppressed and troubled in spirit because (so I deemed) it lay most on me to find a way, and seeing that I had never been in the East Indies and had no steersman's instruments, in chief no compass (as related) I judged it best in my extremity to trust myself to the Lord, for I was truly at my wits end, even as many times before. Therefore I fell on my knees and prayed to God, beseeching Him that since He had hitherto saved and preserved me under His merciful wings and rescued me from fire and water, hunger and thirst and the power of evil men, in His Fatherly goodness He would vouchsafe to preserve me further and open the eyes of my understanding to find the right way whereby we should be restored to our Nation and Friends. Yea ! with deep sighs I prayed. " O Lord, shew us the way and guide me, yet if Thy wisdom deem it best not to bring me in safety to our Nation, suffer then (if it be Thy divine will) some of our company to be saved so that people may know how things have gone with us and our ship ". And having thus spoken with God, I stood up to go down again, and as before once and again cast my eyes round about me, and behold I saw on my right hand that the clouds dispersed from the land by which the horizon became clear, then I saw two high blue mountain tops, and immediately it came into my mind that at Hoorn I did hear Willem

PLATE VIII







## BON FRKOF'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

Cornel. Schouten\* (who had been two or three times in the East India) say that at the corner of Java were two high blue mountains, and we had come along the coast of Sumatra that lay on the left hand while there lay to the right hand; and in between was a gap where I saw no land, and I knew that the strait of Sunda ran in between Java and Sumatra, therefore I was much convinced that we were in the right way and so went cheerfully down from the hill to the merchant and told him I had seen two such mountains. When I had told him this the clouds were again spread over them so that they could not be seen. I told him also what I had heard Willem Cornelisz Schouten tell, and what I concluded therefrom, to wit. That I did verily believe that we were right before the strait of Sunda. Then said the merchant "Well, Captain, if such is your mind of it, let us then call the men together and sail thereto, for your conjecture and reasoning are in my opinion well founded."

Thereupon we called the men together and they brought water in the bamboos and the tops of palm trees which we had gathered for victuals into the boat, and we put off, we had the wind with us and set our course straight for the gap, and at night by the stars. About midnight we saw a fire which we took at first for a ship, and thought it to be a crack<sup>2</sup>, but on coming near found it was a small island which lies in

## JOURNAL OF

the strait of Sunda named Dwars-in-de-weg<sup>1</sup>, and we passed that island. Some little time after we saw another fire on the other side, to wit starboard; we passed that also, I thought them to be good signs of fishers. In the morning at break of day it was calm, we were then on the inside of the island of Java<sup>2</sup>. We sent a man to climb the mast, he looked ahead and called out: "I see ships lying!" and he counted twenty-three of them. Hearing that we sprang up for joy. Then speedily put out the oars and rowed that way, for it was (as related) calm.

Had we not found these ships here, we should have sailed on to Bantam, where we should have been caught in a trap, for they were at war with our nation<sup>3</sup>, the which was a remarkable providence of God for us. We thanked the Lord for His goodness in this matter.

These were all Dutch ships, their commander was of Alkmaar, named Frederik Houtman<sup>4</sup>. He stood at that time in the gallery looking through his telescope or glass towards us, being much amazed at our marvellous sails, not knowing who it was. He sent out his pinnace which rowed towards us to see what kind of folk we were. On coming together we looked and at once knew one another, for we had sailed with them out of Texel and had lost sight of one another in the Spanish sea outside the Channel. The Merchant and I went over into their sloop and rowed to Houtman's

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

ship named *de Maeght van Dordrecht*<sup>1</sup>. The commander Houtman called us aft into the cabin, and gave us welcome, he let the table be spread for us to eat with him. But when I saw the bread and other food, my heart failed and my stomach closed up and tears of joy ran down my cheeks so that I could not eat. Our other men when come on board were speedily divided among the ships.

Houtman at once ordered a pinnace to take me and the Merchant to Batavia. And after we had related to him all our adventures and misfortunes, we went into the pinnace and set sail. We came the next morning before the town of Batavia<sup>2</sup>. The men we knew on the ships had already supplied us with Indian clothes so that we were in good trim before we came into the town.

We went into the town and came before the House where the Governor-General Jan Pietersz Coen of Hoorn resided. We begged the halbardiers to make inquiry if we might go to the General, for we would have speech with him. They went within and returned, and we were admitted and came to him. He knew nought of our arrival, but bade us welcome when we gave our names. Then we had to make a clean breast of it and we said, "Sir General, at such a time we sailed from Texel with the ship *New Hoorn*, and at such a time we reached the strait of Sunda, and

## JOURNAL OF

in such a degree there befel us the disaster that our ship was set on fire and blown to pieces." And we related to him bit by bit how and by what means it came about and that I myself was blown up with the ship, yet by God's mercy was saved, as also another young man ; and I am preserved to this day, the Lord be praised. Hearing this the General said, "That can't be helped ; it is a great misfortune". He questioned us as to all our happenings, and we told him everything just as it had taken place. And he said again . "That can't be helped, it is a great misfortune" After that he said : " Boy, bring me the golden cup ". This he caused to be filled with Spanish wine and said : " Good luck, Captain, here's to you ! You may well think that your life had been lost and that God Almighty has restored it to you again. Stay here and eat at my table for I intend this night to set out for Bantam, to the ships, to make certain arrangements Remain here until I send for you or return here myself ". Then he drank to the Merchant as well, and we had more discourse. At last he departed, and we stayed there and ate at his table the space of eight days. He then summoned us again to come to him at Bantam in the ship *de Meaght van Dordrecht*, where we had been before, and he sent for me first and said : "Captain Bontekoe, you are placed provisionally, till further order, on the ship the *Berger-Boot* to under

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

take the duty of Captain as you have done before". I said . " I thank the Lord General for this favour ".

Two or three days later he sent for the Merchant Heyn Rol and said " Merchant, you are sent provisionally, till further order, to the ship *Berger-Boot* to be supercargo thereon such as you have been before ". Thus we were together again and in command of a vessel

The *Berger-Boot* was a short ship with thirty-two pieces, and appeared to be full of cannon mostly two tiers high . We sailed in the first part of the year 1620 to Ternate', our ship loaded with meat, bacon and rice, also much ammunition of war to supply the forts there , we were three ships in all, to wit the *Berger-Boot* on which I was, the *Neptune*, and the *Morghenstar* , we touched at Gresse<sup>2</sup> on the way. A chief merchant, Wolter Hudden, of Riga in Livland, who was in charge there brought us on board many cattle, fowls, geese, arack, and black sugar. The food for the beasts was rice but half-grown, so as it had been cut off the land, and called paddhu . We put off again from Gresse sailed along the coast past the Strait of Bali, as far as the land of Solor<sup>3</sup> to get the wind, for the Monsoon was passed , so doing we hoped to come the easier to Ambony . But when we came before the harbour of Solor, there came on board the Merchant of the fort, one Raemburgh of Enckhuysen, who had his residency

## JOURNAL OF

there, and told us that there was a place near to named Larantoeka<sup>1</sup>, from where the Specks<sup>2</sup> and Mestizzos who lived there did much damage to our trade, and said it was now a good occasion (while we were three together) to attack the aforementioned place. Whereupon we resolved to undertake this. We sailed thither, accompanied by several Corracorras<sup>3</sup> and a large number of vessels of the country that came to see the event of the affair but came not to help therein. We ran under the fort and the hamlet and shot lustily at them and they likewise at us. At the same time we landed our men, but those of the town made two or three assaults and drove our men back, so that some twenty or twenty-five of our men fell and many were wounded. We were thus forced to return having achieved nothing. We fetched water and took leave of the chief merchant Raemburgh and set our course to N.E. to sail above the island of Batamboer; had sight of it and left it on our larboard; set our course then North East by North to sail the islands of Boeroe and Blau<sup>4</sup>, which we left also to larboard of us. We ran then to the island of Amboina, but could not make it, being thrown out of our course by the current. We got below it, between two small islands, into an inlet named Hieto<sup>5</sup>, and over against it lay Combello where there are many cloves

From Hieto a man on horseback can in a short time

BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE  
ride to Amboina<sup>1</sup> We found there three commanders, to wit the governor Houtman of Alkmaar, the governor 'tLam of Hoorn, with governor Spcult Het Lam had his residency on Maleyen<sup>2</sup>, governor Spcult on Amboina<sup>3</sup>, and Houtman was destined to go with us to Batjan<sup>4</sup>, where we arrived. And after lying there four or five days, we took leave The chief merchant of the fort was relieved, his time being expired, and our Merchant Heyn Rol put in his place Next we went on to all forts in the Moluccas and provided them with meat, bacon, rice, oil, vinegar and other necessities We lay at the island of Maleyen (where the governor Jan Dirckz 'tLam had his residency), about three weeks, took leave of 'tLam and returned to Batjan, where we (as related) had left our merchant Heyn Rol, who had command of the fort He gave us about 200 tons of cloves

Here I took my leave of Heyn Rol, the tears ran down our cheeks, it cut us both to the heart, after we had endured so much misery and peril together as before related Since that time I saw him never again, but I have been told that some time after this he died and was buried on the island of Maleyen The Lord have mercy on his soul and on mine when my time comes

We than sailed across the Boggeronis or Strait of Boeton<sup>5</sup> Ran through the Boggeronis, then across to



## JOURNAL OF

sail above the shoals straight to Java Minor or Little Java<sup>1</sup> and so along the coast to Gresse On coming to Gresse we loaded as many bullocks and fowls as we could put in, in number about ninety beasts and sixteen hundred fowls, with some geese and ducks We gave them paddhi for food. Sixteen fowls could be had there for a real of eight Took leave again of the merchant Wolter Hudden and set our course along Java We sailed close by Japara but did not touch it ; continued our journey and came safely to Batavia

Here we spoke again with the General Coen of Hoorn Unloaded our ship That done I was sent with the same ship to Jambi, to fetch from there a shipload of pepper On the way touched at Palembang Brought a shipload of pepper to Batavia

Then the General sent me to the islands that lie off the route from Bantam to Batavia<sup>2</sup> to fetch stone that lies there on the ground They gave me forty lascars to drive and fasten them to the ropes so as to haul them into the boat These are large stones which they know how to hew into blocks in Batavia, and they finish the points of the fort therewith. This stone is very white, far whiter than lime stone in Holland. The fort is built mostly of such stone, right out of the water to the top , a pleasure to look at We made three such voyages for stone Then came the ship *Groningen* from home, of which Tobias Emden was Captain, and

## BONTEKOE'S EAST INDIAN VOYAGE

Mr van Neck, who had been sheriff at Texel, Merchant. And seeing that the Captain and the Merchant had not been able to live in accord together, they were both by order of our General Coen and his Council put on to the *Berger-Boot*, and I on to the ship *Groningen* with a Junior Merchant given me, by name Jan Claesz of Amsterdam

It was no bad change for me, for on the *Berger-Boot* the kitchen was as bare as a board, as the saying is, and the ship *Groningen* was just come from Holland and had plenty of everything I was ordered to go with it to Jambi again for pepper, with two chests of money ; we should touch at Palembang in passing, which we did and found there a Merchant of Alkmaer, named Hooghlant We left a chest of money with him and set on further to Jambi At that place was a Merchant of Delft, by name Abraham van der Dussen, for whom we brought also a chest of money We lay there long in the road , our lading was brought on board by small boats, besides that we with our own boat rowed off and on every day to fetch pepper from the river. Our chief mate Sipke of Enchyusen, went with the sloop all the way up to the Merchant and found the bark *de Bruynvis* lying by the town, whereof was captain Jaep Mertsz of Hoorn , and after he had made good cheer there in the evening he went to sleep on the afterdeck and rolled off with the blanket round him

## JOURNAL OF

into the water and was drowned, at which tidings I was much grieved. When we had the lading aboard, we took leave of Mr van der Dussen and returned to Batavia, there at once unloaded our ship, we then made again two journeys for stone to the above-named islands. That being done, we sailed again to Jambi for pepper, on which journey our supercargo Jan Claesz died, we then returned to Batavia.

With these voyages in the *Berger-Boot* as also the *Groningen* I was busied some two years. It was then resolved that with this same ship I should go to China in company with seven more ships under Commander Cornelis Reyersz of Gouda, with intent, were it possible, to capture the town of Macao<sup>1</sup>, or to go to the Pescadores and try all possible means to establish a trade with the Chinese, all of which was expressed more fully in the instructions given us by the Governor-General Coen. The General to that end had sent letters to many places ordering the ships to join us at such and such points which we should pass. Among others also to the Manillas<sup>2</sup> to Commander Willem Jansz, who with some Englishmen, was there on an expedition, that some of his ships should join us, which also took place.

The 10th April (1622) after we had lain for some time before Batavia, we set sail, being eight ships, set our course to go through the Strait of Balimbam<sup>3</sup>

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

The 11th we had sight of the land of Sumatra We here fell more southwards than we reckoned, by which we surmised the current ran out of the Strait of Sunda

The 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th we had variable wind and weather, passed the island of Lucipara

The 16th and 17th we reached the island of Banka

The 18th we met with the ship *Nieuw Zealandt* coming out of Japan, which had with her two Portuguese sloops taken by our ships before Malacca, going to Batavia

The 19th to 25th we made little progress, the wind and current being mostly against us, so that we must often come to anchor.

The 29th in the afternoon we came to the northern end of the Strait of Balimbam, and the island of Banka was S E. of us at about a mile distant ; we continued north to the island of Polepon<sup>r</sup>.

The 30th we came to anchor at the S E end of Polepon in twelve fathom and sandy ground. Its coast is highland

The 1<sup>st</sup> May we lay to the West side of the afore-named island in nineteen fathom anchor ground over against the most northerly sand-bay, where the fresh water is a little within the wood, in a flat hollow or dell From the north end of the island of Banka to this above-mentioned island the course is North nineteen miles

## JOURNAL OF

The same day we set sail again ; set our course N E and N E by N., so as to sail above or to the east of the island of Linga.

The 2nd we kept twelve miles N E by N. After noon the east corner of the island of Linga was four miles S.W. by W of us. The coast is very high on the north side. From the west side of Polepon to the east side or corner of Linga the course is N N.E and so northerly nine miles, depth eighteen, nineteen, twenty fathom.

The 3rd the island of Polepaniang<sup>r</sup> was W. and W. by S. of us

The 4th we took our height and found 1 degree 48 minutes north of the Æquinoctial Line. In the afternoon we had sight of the island of Laur, about eight miles N.W. of us the coast high, rising like a lofty mountain, deep thirty-five fathom.

The 6th the island of Pole Timon was W. of us about six miles ; set our course N N E to the island of Pole Candore.<sup>2</sup>

The 9th orders were given for us, with three ships, to go forward, to the island Pole Cecir, to wit : the ship *Groningen* (on which I was), *de Engelsche Beer* and *St. Nicolaes*.

The 18th in the morning we had sight of the island of Pole Candore N N.E of us about nine miles , it is a high coast with small islands lying for the most part

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

on the S E side of the large island The watering-place is on the S W side From the island of Pole Timon to this island the course is straight N N E following the charts , in the waterway deep thirty-five, forty, fifty, sixty fathom, soft ground, but coming near to Pole Candore you find again thirty, twenty-five, twenty fathom, hard sand In the evening we sailed close round the east of the island, about a good half-mile from the most easterly islet , deep eighteen and twenty fathom We set our course to N E for the coast of Champey '

The 21st in the evening, we could still see Pole Candore from the main topmast

The 22nd we had sight of the coast of Champey ' When you are about seven or eight miles from the land, it appears as if it were islands

The 24th we had sight of our other ships again, being at the height of 10 degrees 35 minutes , we were about one and a half miles from the land , the shore here is low, of white sand, but the interior of the land is high and hilly Along the coast, one, two, three miles to sea, it is deep seventeen, sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen fathom and sand. At evening we came to anchor all together in fifteen fathom under a point or corner named Cape of Cecir, being in the height of  $10\frac{3}{4}$  degrees To the north of this cape there is a large bay, where further along the shore is duneland,

the inland country very high and mountainous The coast, from this cape, runs N.E by E.

The 25th we were close to the islet with the cliffs of stone, named Pole Cecir de Terre. Here on the north of the land there is an inlet which runs into the high ground like a river. The dune coast here comes to an end, and there follows high land with deeper water, thirty, forty, and fifty fathom.

The 26th we came to anchor in Malle Bay (by the inhabitants called Bay of Paderan). Here our chief mate Abram Thysz of Flushing went over to the ship *St. Nicolaes*, bound for the Manillas, to see if he could find some ships of Willem Jansz's fleet. There are here many high palm trees by the houses along the shore

The next day we sailed with our four ships to another bay called Canberine<sup>1</sup>, about six miles further and found here water and wood in plenty, as also refreshment in abundance. We got some seventeen oxen and a good number of fowls ; but a Speck of ours deserting to the inhabitants we could obtain no more refreshing afterwards.

The 4th June I went with the boat to our companions in the Bay of Paderan, to report to them of our adventures and returned on the 6th day of that month Meanwhile the sloop *St Cruys* had come to us The next day we set sail and came to the sloop *de Haan*,<sup>2</sup>

BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE  
which had captured a Japanese junk, and there by our  
own ships

The 10th we saw a small island that lay under the  
coast in shape like the Coxbroad by England.

The 20th having sighted several islands on our way,  
we saw two sails close under the coast At evening  
we came to overtake the ships to the Manillas, *de Hoop*<sup>r</sup>  
with *The Bull*, that was an Englishman , kept near  
them all night.

The 22nd we came to Macao and let anchor fall in  
four fathom soft ground , we were then fifteen sail  
strong, ships and sloops, among them two English ships

We had a roll-call of our men, and had them to  
exercise round the mast, in which they were instructed  
according to the use of war. The same they did on  
the other ships

The 23rd, afternoon, with three of our ships, to  
wit *Groningen*, *de Galias* and *de Engelsche Beer*, we  
came close up to the town and anchored in three fathom  
at low tide, about a pedereo-shot from the shore, we  
shot that evening therein five shots In the night  
two of us, to wit . *Groningen* and *de Galias*, came to the  
distance of a little more than a musket-shot before the  
town in three fathom, half flood-tide and soft ground

It was agreed that I and our Merchant Bosschert,  
of Delft, with our men, should row to land and help  
to storm the town, but this resolution was changed,



so as not to deprive the ship of Captain and Merchant at the same time, and I was to stay on the ship and look to affairs, and our Commander go as Captain of the force on land

In the morning, being the 24th day, at break of day we shot into the town with all our broadsides that it shook, as much shot as the pieces could bear. A short time after, the Commander Cornelis Reyersz landed with about six hundred men able to bear arms. Two sloops ran close in shore where the Commander landed, so that in case it went ill with our men they could retreat into them and also to protect the boats and small vessels. The Portuguese had thrown up a breast-work at the spot where our men were to land, from that they offered some resistance, but when our men pressed forward, they fled up the slope to a monastery. Being on land our men advanced valiantly on the Portuguese, who made several sallies against us, but were driven back continually with great courage. Then by mischance some half-barrels of powder got afire which placed our men in a quandary, for before any other could be brought, the Portuguese were acquainted thereof by some Japanese deserters. Our men minding to draw off, the Portuguese on that afore-mentioned report came and fell on them, and as they, through want of powder, could not sufficiently defend themselves, many were slain. The rest retired in much

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

confusion into the boats and came on board. We reckoned to have lost 130 men in all, and had also as many injured ; among them the Commander Cornelis Reyersz, who when first our men landed, was shot in the belly, but by God's help he was cured of his hurt.

The men again on board, we sailed off about three-quarters of a mile and fetched water from an island south of Macao. We took in again our chief mate who had been formerly put off

The 27th day, departed the two English ships with the ship *de Trou'* to Japan The ship *de Hoop* was also placed under our flag.

The 28th day *de Beer* and *St. Cruys* sailed to the island of Lemon<sup>2</sup> and further to inspect the coast of China

The 29th day we all set sail for the Pescadores, save the ship *de Hoop*, the sloop *St Nicolaes* and the small sloop *Palicatten*<sup>3</sup>, which were to stay there till the end of August to watch for the ships that might come there from Malacca <sup>4</sup>

The 30th we passed Idelemo, otherwise the Hare's Ears, ran east and E by S to go above Pole or Pedro Blanco, the islet looks from far like to a large ship or Caravel

The 4th July from our top we had sight of the island of the Pescadores

The 6th day the ship *de Beer* came again to us from

## JOURNAL OF

the coast of China, we held together round the outside of the islands

The 10th we came to anchor behind one of the islands, it rises like a table and was one of the highest islands of the Pescadores. We saw between the islands some Chinese fishermen, but they fled before us.

The next day we weighed anchor and ran into a fine enclosed bay, in eight or nine fathom anchorage. This country is flat and stony, has no trees from which to get wood, is grown over with long grass, it has reasonably fresh water to be got from wells, but the weather being dry it is brackish. The water is found in two inlets where the ships lie; otherwise here is no refreshment, it must all be brought there, and as this place was appointed to us for a rendezvous, we put in to a harbour at the end of Ile Formosa, named Tayowan<sup>r</sup> where the Chinese have some trade. From there we afterwards, with our sloops, fetched much victual; it lies thirteen miles from the Pescadores, has no more than eleven foot of water at the entrance, which is somewhat crooked, so that large vessels cannot come into it.

The 19th day we sailed, namely the ship *Groningen* and *de Beer*, to go over to the coast of China; we met with the sloop *St Cruys*. The next day *de Beer* broke her foreyard by reason of which we were forced to take in sail to keep in company with her

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

The 21<sup>st</sup> we had sight of the continent of China and came before the renowned river Chunchu'. This river is easily recognisable, for such as Jan Huygen van Linschoten doth relate' at the corner on the N E side are two hills, one of which is like the pillar of a church, and the S W side of the river is low, sandy ground, and a little to the inside of the S W corner can be seen a tower or what has the likeness thereof. Here we should have run on the S W side under a small round island, but as the ship *de Beer* could not make the road, we had to stand out to sea again, for her broken rard was not yet repaired. It now began to blow hard, so that the next day our foresail blew out of the bolt-ropes, we beat up against the wind, but were driven strongly to the north.

The 25<sup>th</sup> we sighted a very broken coast at the height of 27 degrees 9 minutes, which we surmised both by the writing of Jan Huygen and by the showing of the chart, to be in the island of Lanquyn. Came to anchor under it in fifteen fathom, we saw many Chinese fishermen, about three, four, five to six miles out from land.

We did every day our utmost to steer south but were driven continually northward, from which it appears there goes a strong northerly current.

The 27<sup>th</sup> came a fisherman alongside of us who sold us some dried fish.

The 9<sup>th</sup> August we found ourselves by the islands

## JOURNAL OF

of China, which are very numerous. Came to anchor in fifteen fathom Judging by the chart, and the height we took, we did conjecture to be about the Cape de Somber, but could not see either cape nor coast, therefore judged the cape to be more northerly than shown by the charts.

The 11th we weighed anchor and ran under the island of Lanquyn, that lies in  $28\frac{1}{2}$  degrees north of the *Æquinoctial* Line, in a tolerable road on the north side of which we had discovered with the boat, to seek water and refreshment ; found none or scanty victuals, but there was good water. As we lay here there came to us some Chinese in their sampan, who presented us with five baskets of white sugar for each ship They were we surmised, so far as we could understand from them, Chinese pirates, freebooters on their own nation. The next day we fetched our water and set sail again, but prospered little

The 18th day we cast anchor again on the west side of the same island in a better road than the other ; it was a harbour where one is sheltered from nearly all winds Here the aforesaid pirates had their anchorage, they brought us some victual which they knew where to find, but it was of little use for the whole of our ships' crews. They many times proposed that we should go with them to the coast and so they might be in our shelter, they would bring refreshment for us,

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

ver. boat-loads thereof, yet we thought it not advisable to do this. They hoisted Prince-flags<sup>1</sup> on their little ships and under that ensign robbed their own nation.

We set sail again to join our other ships in the Pescadores, where after much variable weather we arrived on the 22nd September. There we saw our men at work to throw up a fort or castle. We found also two ships with a sloop more than we had left there, come later from Batavia, to wit the ship *de Gouden Leeuw*<sup>2</sup>, the *Sampson* and the sloop *Sincla-Pure*<sup>3</sup>.

The next day there came two sloops from the coast of China, having left one behind that was wrecked on that coast, but they had saved the men and the guns, in this the Chinese had been very helpful to them. These ships had been sent out to talk with the Chinese for traffic, who sent them back with great expectations and did promise to come to us with an ambassador in the Pescadores to speak further together, which on the 29th day they did. They came with four junks with their ambassador, to agree with our commander and council about the traffic, but nothing was carried out, for all they promised they kept not, seeking by these means to move us from the Pescadores, the which was contrary to the orders given us by our Governor-General.

The 10th October *de Gouden Leeuw* set sail to Jamb

The 18th day we, namely eight sail, three ships and

five sloops, were ordered to go to the river Chinchu and the coast of China to see if through fear of our enmity and force we could move them to traffic with us,<sup>1</sup> but we came about ten miles too low. Three of our ships were parted from us ; we were then five, and cast anchor in a bay where by our sloops we set afire as much as sixty or seventy junks great and small <sup>a</sup>

There here befel an affair worthy to be recorded. As our men were busied in bringing two junks they had seized alongside of us, and by reason of the strong wind were forced to anchor, having with them the boat with our pinnace, in the forepart of the night their anchors slipped and they drifted away, the one having in her twenty-three of our men and two Chinese. The sloop *Victoria* that lay anchored beside them to help them, by reason of the foul weather and darkness could give no assistance. The one junk drifted away, those in the other junk, who were six, removed into the boat and set fire to the junk, but as they could hardly put up sail in the boat, and being on a low shore, they threw out the grapnel. But after lying about two hours with the grapnel the rope broke and they were driven onto the shore in peril of their lives, and more so because in being beached the matches of their muskets were blown out, and they had nothing but enemies to expect on land, and were too few in number to resist force ; for they were but four men and two boys. Therefore

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

they gave up the matter to God and prayed to Him to deliver them from their peril. Thus they sat in great fear and trembling in the boat and waited for day-break. Presently there came a body of Chinese to the boat. Our men grasped their swords in their hands and shouted and cried as if they would attack them. Hearing which the Chinese, who by reason of the darkness could not see how many men there were, made away, as it were, afraid of the affrighted. Our men took this for a certain token of God's mercy and protection over them. When day came they resolved to leave the boat (seeing it was impossible for them to bring her off the shore into the water), with muskets on their shoulders and swords at their sides, were it possible, to journey by land to the river of Sammitju before which our two sloops lay. The twenty-three men who had drifted away with the other junk, were captured. Some years later one of the twenty-three men came back as I have heard. But these six could see no junk or any sign of it being on shore; therefore they marched on.

A body of Chinese seeing them, came to them and sent two of their men forward to speak with ours, but our men trusted them not and lifted their matches as if to shoot at them, upon which they let them pass.

Finding a small house wherein was a man and woman, on their way, they went therein, lighted their matches



## JOURNAL OF

and put their guns in order, which were altogether unready by reason of being wetted in landing with the boat. Here too they had food, for this man gave them some rice, and thanking him they hastened on their way. They saw some six or seven Chinese lie dead on the shore, a prey for the dogs and birds ; they had been slain by our men. From this they could judge easily what would be done to them if they were taken , they resolved therefore to defend themselves so long as they could hold a sword in their hands.

After this they met with a multitude of Chinese, they thought as many as two hundred, who all fled from them. In the afternoon they came near our sloops, and fired several shots with their muskets so as to be heard and fetched by those in the sloops. But by reason of the shots there came seven or eight hundred Chinese (as they estimated) running out of a large village nearby , they came towards our men armed with knives and pikes. Our men (as it seemed) had nothing but death before them, sent some shots among the crowd. Seeing that our men were resolved to die fighting, they ran back , some came to a stand afar off and threw stones ; it appeared they had not heard much shooting, for they were mightily shaken thereat our men said. Then after awhile they offered them friendship , and asked them to come to their village

Being come into the village there stood some thousand

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

Chinese (at a guess) who gazed at them with wonder, it seemed they had never yet looked upon any Hollander in their lives. They brought our men into their temple, gave them food and drink and some tobacco. Our men sat down close together, their guns held ready for they trusted no one and feared they would be surprised. Sitting thus their match was burnt, they tore pieces from their shirts and twisted them into a match as well as they could. They then went away from the village thanking the Chinese for the benefit received, rejoicing to escape so happily from there, and that no one pursued them, for they had not four shots of powder left in their bandoleers.

They came to the beach, found there a sampan, and pushed off. Coming into the water it sank immediately it was so leaky. They then went into a fisherman's house where some of them lay down to sleep, but the others could not or dared not sleep as they heard in the night a party of Chinese round the house. In the morning they made two rafts of what they could find best suited to the purpose, and came therewith to the sloops which were about to sail, so that they must not have been any longer about it or they would have been left behind. By these happenings it can be seen clearly what perils a man can come through if the Lord's protection works mercifully for him, for without that it were almost a miracle that so small a band of men

## JOURNAL OF

should have escaped out of the hands of the Chinese, who were their enemies.

The 2nd November the sloop *St. Nicolaes* sailed to the place where the boat lay ashore, it had been plundered by the Chinese of its sails, mast, rudder, two small guns and the iron plate from the prow. They set it afloat and brought away ten goats and three or four pigs by way of reprisals, and so with the boat to the ship

The 4th day *de Beer's* boat took two junks with twenty-five men and set the junks afire, the men they brought to the sloop *St Nicolaes*

The 9th November our chief mate died at sea, we buried him on an island in 23 degrees

The same day the boat of *de Beer* sailed to a party of junks, but the wind came so strong that the above-mentioned boat with eighteen men, among them the captain Jan Jansz, drifted away, to the great grief of all of us. We sent the sloop *Victoria* to seek her, but had never sight of her again. Lying here with our two ships, we had lost forty of our best sailors, which grieved us mightily.

The 25th we came together before the river Chinchu Cast anchor under an island by a town, from which the inhabitants took flight. We brought therefrom about forty beasts, among which several pigs, also a number of hens, which served well for refreshing, as



## JOURNAL OF

with such horrid cries and screaming as if the end of the world were come ; they came at us lustily and we not willing to give way, we did beat our swords about one another's heads. But when we had shot down a number of them with our muskets they fell back and took to their heels. They had beaten down our sergeant and the sailmaker of *de Beer*, who if we had not relieved them would have been dead. The sergeant's bandoleer was cut off his body. We drove them back to their fort, slaying them all the while. We lost one man ; he was the barber of *de Beer*, but if he were slain or taken prisoner we knew not. We set the two junks as well as their whole village on fire and came again on board at evening with a good booty of pigs, goats, hens and other plunder, pieces of furniture and various things. The beasts we made ready that night to make good cheer next day, after this difficult enterprise on land.

The 2nd December we went again on land and plundered another village, set it afire as the previous one. We found here twenty-one bales of twisted silk thread in a warehouse and brought it with the other booty on board.

The next day we sailed to another island, on which stood a great tower. We found no people there ; cast anchor at high water in  $5\frac{1}{2}$  fathom and in the early part of the night with low tide we found ourselves fast ,

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

it appeared that a powerful current goes here in and out. That same night with the flood tide, the Chinese sent two fire junks at us, they drifted near *de Beer*, which lay at anchor above us. One of them seemed about to come straight for our bow, which caused great consternation in our ship. We stood all men on deck and some said this and some said that. But I making sure that it would miss us was not so distressed. The Merchant Nieuwenrode who stood near me said: "Captain, let them cut the rope." I informed him that it was not advisable to cut the rope while we lay on the shore, it would of necessity lose us our ship and that the junk would not touch us. But the junk netting us, the merchant judged it could not miss, he cried out "Cut the rope! Cut the rope!" And I shouted against him. "Don't cut, for if you cut we shall lose the ship. It will miss us, don't cut!" When the Merchant saw that the men who had already begun to cut the rope saved their hand and listened to me, he called to me (believing the junk to be as good as aboard us) "Captain Bontekoe, see, it is your fault. I shall make you suffer for this." But I still in fear that the men should cut through the rope, called again "'Twill miss, 'twill miss, don't cut, don't cut!" Which was truth, for it gave us so wide a berth that it even missed our mainyard which was then athwart, although its mast was much higher than our

## JOURNAL OF

yard. Only our sampan that lay alongside our stern, did catch fire, which we cut adrift, so certainly it was a good thing it did not come much closer. It was an awful sight, for the junk burned so mightily as if it had been filled with sulphur, and would have made short work of us. I had the rudder moved over from one side to the other, which had made the ship swing from the anchor, which (next God) was the only cause that the junk missed us.

The 4th we weighed anchor and came to the island in the mouth of the river from where we had taken the forty beasts, as related. We there fetched water and set sail from there the 7th day to go across to the Pescadores. Being halfway over our fore-mainsail was blown away, and the next day we cast anchor (by reason of the intemperate weather we could not use sail to go inside the inlet before which we stood) under the next island that lies to the west of the inlet, in fifteen fathom.

The 9th day we broke from our anchorage, dropped another anchor, but after lying four hours the rope of this broke also. We then drifted away from the islands and that in a violent storm from N E and N.N E.

The 10th our ship did so leak that with two pumps it was as much as we could do to keep above water, we had seven foot water in the ship and our stern pump

## BONTEKOE'S EAST INDIAN VOYAGE

was every now and again out of order. We had aft in the storehouse a load of paddhi and when a hole was sprung in the storehouse, the paddhi slipped down it into the pump, which made our pump almost useless, as fitted. We were therefore forced to throw the paddhi overboard for we feared that it would fill up the scuppers and make them useless.

The 13th and 14th it became good sailing weather; we found ourselves close under the coast of China, we here met the ship *Haerlem*, whereof my brother Pieter Ysbrantse Bontecoe was captain, they also had intended to be at the Pescadores and were driven away by the aforesaid storm; they came from Japan. We held together four days, but we lost more way than we gained, therefore ran together into the roadstead on the coast of China.

The 20th the ship *Haerlem* took some seven sampans with thirty-six Chinese in them and three junks that were loaded with salt, salted fish and other goods. The same day it was agreed that we should take over the lading brought by the *Haerlem* from Japan, for the ship *Haerlem* was weak and in such case that she dared not put off to have her bottom doubled, and on the other hand our ship was strong and good. Also we were water-tight again. We therefore cleared up our ship and began the next day to load. Then came two Chinese from the land to the ship *Haerlem*, they



## JOURNAL OF

brought some apples, fowls and pigs on board, for which deed they gave him his junk back. We then here fetched water and made ready to sail again : put up a fish on our foremast and yard.

The 1st January (1623) it was resolved that the chief mate Jan Garritsz de Naeyer with some sixty persons of the ship *Haerlem* should come on our ship. And our second mate Geleyn Cornelisz with others went over to the ship *Haerlem* to go to Batavia and so further home. The Merchants were busy writing letters to that end, the one to Batavia the other to the Pescadores.

We put over some eighty-four Chinese on to the ship *Haerlem* which set sail from us the 4th day to Batavia. In the night the Chinese fetched away a junk from near our ship though we shot at them; they got away; we had no yawl to pursue them.

The 5th the Chinese came and fished round about us. It seemed they knew we had no yawl, our carpenters were busy every day making one. We had procured a half-worn sail from the ship *Haerlem* and therewith we furnished the yawl and our ship with what was needful. We kept good watch by night being fearful of burning junks the Chinese might send us.

The 7th we set sail for the open sea, but by reason of contrary winds were forced to return. Came back to our old anchorage, took a junk as we were sailing,

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

from which we took the cables and other rope-work and then set it on fire The men had fled out of it ; the rope-work came in very handy to us

The 9th and 10th we finished the mast, wings and other gear of our yawl , were still held in the road by unfavourable wind

The 11th day we saw towards evening two junks under the shore The Merchant desired we should send the boat to them, but I deemed it not advisable, for the night drew near and the weather was very tempestuous, it showed as if to blow harder, and looked evil So I said that we ought not to risk our men lightly , therefore it was not done By night there rose a storm and we were right glad the boat had remained on board

The next day, in the morning, we went with the boat to a junk which came tacking into the bay , but ere we could get up to it there came four war-junks to its assistance who shot mightily at us and as it was close to land where there stood as much as a thousand people (so it seemed) on the beach, armed, we were forced to leave it and return on board.

The 14th, at night in the first watch, I went with the boat to another junk, which put up a fight and shot for about two glasses at us, and seeing we drifted too far from the ship and had but little chance to take the junk, we came back on board in the day-watch

## JOURNAL OF

The 15th the chief mate with the boat went out again to a junk that came from Teysing ; they attacked it lustily but were forced to leave it. They had three wounded among them, one fatally, for he was shot through by a poisoned weapon.

The 18th I went with the boat to five junks, one held on its way and the other four roped themselves together side by side and made ready for a fight with shields, swords, arrows and small cannon—for they were war junks—so that after but little fighting we left them. The junks came after us. Our men in the ship seeing this, and being in fear they would seize us, made ready our two stern guns to shoot at them, for it was near the ship ; we were not a thousand steps from the ship. We furled the sail and lowered the foresail and rowed right up against the wind. Those in the junks seeing this turned away from us. In the evening we came on board again and set sail that same night with the wind N.W.

The 19th in the morning we were about a mile outside the coast or from the point of Teysing ; we had Peter Blanca S E of us about five miles ; it lies in the height of 22 degrees 20 minutes ; we sailed along the coast. On the same day we gave rations to the crew, one tankard of water a day.

The 20th by sundown, on account of contrary winds, we cast anchor again in seventeen fathom about six

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

miles from land, N. by E. from Cache, for we could gain no way by sailing. Here our cable broke, so we were forced to hoist sail again, yet next day through all weather we came again to anchor about eight miles eastward of Texing.

The 22nd we sent out the boat nearer land to seek for better anchorage, on their report we sailed up within half a cañon hot off the shore, in a good roadstead.

The 23rd in the morning, wind still continued contrary from N. E. with cool weather.

The 24th died the man who was so grievously wounded nine days earlier, named Hendrick Bruys, of Bremen.

The 25th our carpenter had the pinnace near finished.

The 27th our Merchant Nieuwenroode sailed to land with the small and long boat, to see if water was to be found, but there was none. We saw some junks lying in the river and in the afternoon we attacked them with muskets, but they shot at us with small cannon and hoisted sail, so we came back having done them no hurt.

The 28th our chief mate took a small junk with dried and salted fish, and eight Chinese, who yielded themselves at once.

The 29th and 30th we made several attacks on junks

## JOURNAL OF

and fisher-boats, but took only one fisher-boat with five men. We sought for water which I did find the 31st day, very sweet and fresh and easy to come at

The following days to the 7th February we took in water ; every day it was foul and variable weather with wind contrary for continuing our voyage

The 8th we went with the boat and yawl and twenty-seven musketeers to land to make an expedition We came to a village from which the people were fled ; marched inland a short way and found a herd of buffaloes, of which we brought seventeen to the ship with four pigs and many hens. It was every day foul weather.

The 10th day the Merchant Niewenroode went again with yawl and boat on land and twenty-five musketeers ; they marched inland , came to two villages from which the people were all fled ; set on fire both villages and came again on board

The 11th day one of our two small junks turned over and sank, but the mast which was fourteen palm thick and 59 ft long, we managed to get out. Our boat went again to land to fetch straw for the buffaloes.

The 12th we made another land raid with fifty armed men Plundered two villages, saw some buffaloes but could not catch them , took some sacks of garlic and onions, and after being some two miles inland returned on board.

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

The 15th our chief mate was put in irons, for reason of there being fire in his cabin, but was released at evening Our carpenters made a fishplate on our main-mast

The 18th we put overboard a man who had died the night before We most days made expeditions with our small junk or yawl or boat to the fishing vessels and junks, but could gain nothing It was mostly foul weather and cold

The 20th we took a junk with fourteen Chinese They told us they came out of the river Chinchu, also that Commander Cornelis Reyersz had made a treaty with the people of Chinchu, but all the same we took it and put the goods over into our ship We repaired our mast and bowsprit with fishplates and what was needful

The 10th March fetched water every day if fair weather. On this day a bird was shot (as he flew in the air) from our ship

The 14th went on land near all of us, pulled our boat up on shore to caulk and clean it ; came on board again in the evening

The 17th day there died one of the sailors, by name Claes Cornelisz, of Middelburg

The 18th very intemperate weather with thunder, lightning and rain. This night died the second mate Jan Gerritsz Brouwer of Haarlem, who was made second mate about five and a half weeks before

## JOURNAL OF

The 20th, in the night three Chinese sprang overboard ; meaning to get away with the boat, but as the watch became aware of it, we took the one back but the other two were drowned

The 30th we took two junks and a fishing boat with twenty-seven men.

The 2nd April we put on shore two Chinese who promised to bring us refreshment for their ransom , one was wounded and the other very old.

The 5th we saw two Chinamen stand in our wood-junk and call out to be taken on board. We sent our sampan to them ; found one was the same as we had put ashore the 2nd day. They had been brought in the night to our wood-junk by other Chinese and had with them hens, eggs, a pig, lemons, apples, sugar cane and tobacco, some of everything ; out of gratitude for having their liberty restored to them Verily a great virtue, putting to shame many Christians, who once they are out of the trap often think little of their promises.

The 6th we resolved to break up the one junk and lade the timber of it into the other and take it with us to the Pescadores, for they there needed firewood.

The 7th we put the two before-mentioned Chinamen again on land

The 8th there came a proa to our ship with two other Chinamen, who brought us (like the former) some

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

refreshment, as apples, eggs, some pots of arack, for which we promised to set free two men, one who was wounded, and another, on condition they should bring us more victuals. Gave them also twenty-five reales in money for which to bring us pigs and then allowed them to sail to land. In the night our junk (which we had begun to break up) foundered.

The 9th and 10th we fetched water for the junk as well as for our ship, and put seventeen men of our crew into the junk, to sail together to the Pescadores as soon as wind and weather should be favourable.

The 11th day came the last two Chinamen again from the land bringing with them five pigs, a quantity of eggs, fish, apples and other goods.

The 12th it blew a great storm, we lowered our yards. A Chinese proa was driven away from us with one of our men, sent a yawl and fetched him out, but they could not row back the proa by reason of the great wind, they had bound it to the stern of the yawl, but were forced at last to let it drift and came again on board.

The 13th we let the Chinamen who brought us the refreshment row back to land with their two comrades as promised.

The 15th day the men in the junk were busied in proving a cannon which they had fixed on a new gun-carriage. Charged it with ball-shot, setting its mouth



## JOURNAL OF

to the door of the junk. Just then came a young man out of the hold, and stands in the door to make water, knowing nought of the others doing. Then comes one with the lin-stock from the other side (not seeing the young man) and puts the fire in and shoots the young man through the leg. Verily a grievous misfortune and very heedless of the rammer.

We slaughtered that afternoon in our ship a buffalo and a pig, for the next day to hold the feast of Easter.

While they were busied therewith our Dominie fell to scuffling with one of the helpers, both were put in irons.

The 16th being Easter Day they were both set free. Then the men from the junk came all into our ship to hear the sermon and stayed to dine with us on the buffalo. The next day they came again to hear the preaching, it was every day tempestuous weather and variable winds.

The 19th the young man who was shot in the leg had his leg taken off, he died about an hour later.

The 20th we had tempestuous weather from E N E. Lowered our top-mast, put out another anchor, it looked as if everything would be blown to pieces. The two Chinamen whom we put off our ship the 13th came again to us and brought some refreshment, told us there would come some two hundred junks together to fall upon us. We therefore made ready (on this

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

warning), so if they came to give them right good greeting.

The 27th we took up our sampan into the ship and set the two fishing proas out of it which the junk took in. We desired to set sail for we dared no longer stay there. But seeing that every day the wind blew a great storm we could not set sail, the more because the wind was against us.

The 28th we put twenty Chinese into the junk, to bring those besides our own to the Pescadores.

The 29th in the morning with better weather, the wind E N E, we set sail with our junk, but were much out of our course by the strong contrary wind and other hindrance.

The 1st May, unsettled weather. In the morning we saw that our junk had got away from us, but had sight of her at last a good distance to leeward of us, she lay in distress, her sail was blown away. Resolved as the wind began to grow in force to take the men out of her. To that end I went there with the boat, took the men over, but besides our men, who were sixteen in number, we could not get more than ten Chinese, the others having hid themselves. The wind also became stronger, so that ten Chinese remained in the boat and drifted away. Came in the afternoon on board again, surmised ourselves to be about eight mile outside the easternmost islands of Macao. And as

## JOURNAL OF

here a steady wind blows from half year to half year that is called Monsoon, so those who come too short of it either on one side or the other of the Pescadores can not well get up to it before the Monsoon changes. For this reason we were here beaten about for a long time, at times riding at anchor, at times sailing, before we could make the Pescadores. We suffered much distress from storm and sickness, for want of refreshing ; yea, at last, of ninety men there were not fifty in health of our own crew. On our way we met with another Chinese junk, richly laden to a value of thousands, that was bound for the Manillas We took it, it had in it as much as 250 souls Took in most of the men save about twenty or twenty-five and put with them fifteen or sixteen of our own men ; we tied the junk to our ship and towed it.

We then had several hundred Chinese in our ship, and feared they might overpower us, for we, as related were but fifty strong of men in health We caused all our men to go with a sword at their side, as if they were all officers.

By night we let all the Chinese into the hold, then set a beam above on the hatch and hung lamps everywhere about it so that the lower deck was lighted , at the hatch five or six men with bare swords kept watch, and in the morning we opened the hatch and let the Chinese come on deck for needful purposes and other

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

matters, with this our ship was crowded with people. I went often into the cabin to sleep but could not. When I came on deck the Chinese immediately made way for me, went down on their knees on either side with folded hands—they were as lambs. A story was told there was a prophecy among their nation that their land should be conquered by men with red beards, and as I had a red beard, on that account they looked on me with the more fear. Yet this was but what people said, how it is God knows. Nevertheless we durst not trust them.

During the day they sat on the bulwark of the ship and on the chamwales, cleaning and combing their hair. They had such long hair that with many of them when they stood up it hung to the calves of the legs, they twist it like a plait and coil it on their heads, push a pin through to keep it fast, with a comb close to it. We brought them all to the Pescadores, there, with the other Chinese we had brought in other ships and sloops, we tied them together in pairs. We used them to carry earth to the fort, yet, when the fort was built, they were as much as 1,400 in number, who were afterwards taken to Batavia and there sold.

The Pescadores was our rendezvous place, as related and keeping it firmly, went to and fro bringing together there all the Chinese we could take. While we lay here in the Pescadores, we were assailed by such a

## JOURNAL OF

hurricane of wind that all the ships were nearly blown on the shore , among them our junk was blown entirely to the land

There in the Pescadores I had a letter from Batavia, by the hand of Christian Fransz, from my brother Pieter Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, who, as before related, was Captain on the ship *Haerlem*, and on 4th January by the coast of China had left us to go to Batavia. He wrote me that our brother Jacob Ysbrantsz the year before was also come out of Holland as Captain in India, thus we were three brothers in the land, all three Captain. He told that Jacob with the ship *Mauritius* in company with *het Wapen van Rotterdam*, had arrived in distressful condition, they had on the voyage lost about 275 men \* *Het Wapen van Rotterdam* had not enough men in health that they could use their sails. Jacob came on two sloops in the Strait of Sunda, that brought him to Batavia, but the other ship, *het Wapen van Rotterdam*, he had left on the south side of Java, whither he was sent with sloops and other vessels to seek her ; he found her and was made Captain of her. He was sent to Amboina. Wrote also that the Governor-General Coen in the ship wherewith Jacob came into this country, that is *Mauritius*, had sailed from the East Indies to Holland the 2nd February 1623, in the company of three other ships, and that Mr Pieter de Carpentier some days before the departure



## JOURNAL OF

that some one from Amoy would come and speak to us.

The 29th we conferred together and agreed that on each ship we should make ready thirty or forty swabbers and eight or nine tubs of water and also place a number of leather buckets along the ship so that, if the Chinese came to us with fire-junks, we should be able to put them out, as also we should keep strict watch and that every night two pinnace should lie about the third of a mile from the ships to keep watch, also to fetch water. We made the cannon in readiness and were ever on our guard. Then as no one came to us from Amoy, we wrote a letter the 30th day to the Totok<sup>r</sup> of Amoy and sent it by the old Chinaman whom we found on the island. We wrote that we were come there to request of them for traffic and peace so as we had done in the conference held formerly between them and us, with further some compliments befitting this kind of writing. We published also that same day an ordinance on all the ships, impressing on our men the need for keeping good watch, as hostile and treacherous action was to be looked for from the Chinese, and threatening men with severe penalties for neglect of duty.

The 1st November there came a Chinaman named Cipzuan to us with his sampan. He said that if so be we came in peace to request peace and traffic, it would not be their fault if we could not agree, as the inhabitants

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

there were well-inclined, he then gave us hope of good success. Said also that some three hundred Chinese merchants had conferred together and resolved to send a request to the Combon of Hockchu<sup>1</sup> petitioning to be allowed to traffic with us since (so he said) by reason of the war they had lost their goods, and should the war continue they were in fear of being brought to poverty altogether, therefore they resolved urgently to beg of the before-mentioned Combon to consent to peace and traffic with us.

This Cipzuan said further that in the place where he lived there was a hermit or anchorite who lived in the mountains, was of high birth and had been mighty rich (I believe also Mandarin over the province) and had withdrawn himself to this solitude after the death of his wife whom he loved dearly, he now busied himself with nought (so he said) but advocating with the great ones the cause of poor people who were without means. Thus he was held in great respect and regard by both great and small, yea, he was esteemed as a prophet and his words accounted to be prophecy. He said also that he had laid before this hermit the differences between us and them, and when understanding that the great ones were preparing to make war on us, he (said Cipzuan) had gone to them and prophesied that (if they did war against us), they would bring their own position into great peril. Upon which



## JOURNAL OF

Christiaen Fransz. asked the above-mentioned Cipzuan if he could not have speech with the hermit in order to set forth to him our just and honourable proposals with all circumstance; the which Cipzuan promised to bring about; he doubted not to persuade him and said: "I will do this so that you will believe that I mean well towards you". Thereupon he departed; he declared that he had come to us secretly.

The 3rd day Cipzuan with the said hermit and another Chinaman came on board to us. We related to him the reason of our coming hither and what our intentions and desires were. He (after some speech on both sides) promised to do his utmost to bring the business to a good end. We gave him a letter (of the same contents as that which we had sent by the old Chinaman) for the Totok. He gave his word to hand the same himself to the Totok. Two or three days later Cipzuan came again to us and brought answer to ours, in which the Totok wrote that he understood we had arrived with our ships under the island with the Pagodas to request peace and traffic with them, to the which he would consent if so be we came in good faith and not as we had formerly done, in falsehood and deceit (such he was pleased to write). It would then be possible to come to a good understanding. He had in the last conference with us indicated two ways, to wit: To set free the Chinese prisoners, and go away

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

from Pehoue, called by us the Pescadores , but we had not been willing to accept either of these terms whereby the negotiations were broken off

We answered that our intentions were good and had ever been so He wrote again that he understood we were come to rob the Chinese and brought no money or merchandise for traffic, and entreated us to declare our meaning Whereupon we answered him again that our intentions were good and the same as before we entreated to have traffic with them He wrote again that if we persisted in our good intentions, we should send one of our Captains to him to confer with him about everything and make a treaty or truce with each other, for a number of years or for ever We besought the aforesaid Totok that it might please him to permit us to come with a sloop before Amoy to be near at hand, for this business could be handled better from nearby than from a distance This licence was granted to us at once, to come before Amoy with one or two ships We then at last the 13th agreed together that our Commander Christiaen Fransz with the sloops *Muyden* and *Erasmus* should sail to Amoy

The 14th the sloops departed and came next day to Amoy, and we with the two ships continued to lie under the island.

Between the 17th and 18th, in the latter part of the night, I went with the boat to our sloops to get tidings

## JOURNAL OF

how the matter stood, for it began to grieve us it lasted so long, which seemed on their setting out so nearby. But being on the way and near the sloops, we saw that one was on fire and the other had also three fire-junks alongside and stood in great peril by a great multitude of vessels, sampans and some war-junks, and we saw about fifty fire-junks. We went to the sloop *Erasmus*, which had valiantly put out one fire-junk, and got the other two out of her way, so that she was miraculously freed from the peril. But the sloop *Muyden's* foresail and fore-top-sail had caught fire, and she appeared to be beyond help, she was burnt and soon blew up with men and all, being a most pitiful business. We went instantly to our ships with the sloop *Erasmus*.

Our men on the *Erasmus* related to us how the affair had befallen so far. They said: As soon as they were come before Amoy, there came at once a deputation on board to request that some of the chief persons should come on land to the Totok to speak together by word of mouth, which the Commander did with courtesy refuse, saying he had no suitable interpreters therefor. But if the Totok pleased he would send some of his men with full power to conclude a treaty with them. Upon that they returned to land.

Being come again they said. That the Totok had fully authorised them to that end and that all they should conclude with us would be firmly and

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

indissolubly recognised and maintained by him They then entered into negotiation and agreed and concluded that they would come and traffic with us at Tayowan and there bring us so much silk-goods as our capital would be good for , that they would not sail to the Manillas, Cambodia, Siam, Patany, Jambi, Andrigerry or other places without a pass from us , and they should also send four or six junks to Batavia to confer with our General regarding the Pescadores, from where they would be glad to have us move

This treaty having been solemnly agreed to, they returned on land , and afterwards came again on board and begged us that some of our Captains would come on land to the Totok , that the treaty should be written and sworn on the one side in Chinese and the other side in Dutch so that the Totok could write to the Combon of Hockchu that this had been done in his presence They brought with them three Mandarins as hostages, and (according to their custom) three arrows as a pledge

Commander Christiaen Fransz, with the Council from the sloops, thereupon agreed that the Commander himself with Doede Florisz Craegh, Captain of the *Muyden*, and Willem van Houdaen, Chief-Merchant on the *Erasmus*, should go on land to carry out the above-mentioned Being come on land with about thirty men, among them the Captain of the *Erasmus*,

## JOURNAL OF

Jan Pietersz. Reus, they were (so it seemed) very well received. Tables were set out on the shore for the sailors, and the meal quickly served. The Commander instructed Jan Pietersz. Reus to have care of the men to take them presently on board again, while he, with the other delegates, was conducted to the house of the Totok. It appeared they designed to make the sailors drunken, the Mandarin served the table, they desired Captain Jan Pietersz. Reus should also go up to the Totok. He did as if he were going to follow, but seeing (as he surmised) it was no fair dealing, bade the men stand up and fall into the boat and so with it to the ship.

In the evening (so it as was agreed) the steersman, Moses Claesz. of the sloop *Muyden*, went with a boat manned to the shore to fetch our three aforesaid Councillors. Coming on land they were taken and held by the Chinese. The men in the sloops knew not what to think wherefore the boat with our Councillors remained so long on land, inquired of the hostages why they returned not: they answered: "They are merry". But it was but a poor merriment, for that same night about four hours before daybreak, they came (as related) with some fifty fire-junks to destroy the sloops and they did destroy the one, as related. The Chinese had also sent some Chinese beer to the sloops wherein they put poison to poison our men, but it was found

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

out without doing injury, it seemed God willed it not.

These tidings grieved us all sorely, for it was a great loss to us and a godless piece of villainy by the Chinese, which God shall judge in His own time

What thing more evil in the world can be  
Than seeming friend who proves an enemy ?

The 18th we fetched some firewood from the houses on the island of the Pagodas where we lay, then resolved to sail to the north side of the river being more safe anchorage from the fire-junks, for we now saw plainly, it was not friendship but enmity they sought with us.

The 19th the ship *Engelsche Beer* came from Japan to us, we related to them all our adventures and for this with other reasons the Council of the ships did assemble in the ship *Beer* and concluded what may be understood in this following resolution

Resolution, taken by the chiefs of the ships lying before the river of Chinchu on the 24th November, 1623

Whereas, setting forth from Japan on the 11th November it was thought meet, for the better security of our voyage to the Pescadores, for us to touch at the coast of China, therefore, God be praised, we came on the 19th before the river of Chinchu and found there the ships *Groningen*, *Samson* and *Erasmus*, from whom to our great sorrow we learned the distressful burning of

## JOURNAL OF

the sloop *Muyden* as also the taking prisoner of the Commander Christiaen Fransz with the other deputies who had on our part gone to treat with the Chinese for peace. And as the instructions of Commander Cornelis Reyersz. require that, whether there be war or peace, the river of Chinchu shall be held by ships ; it appears that our comrades of the above-mentioned ships do complain sorely of being overburdened with sick men, in particular the *Samson*, having scarce men in health enough to weigh their anchor ; who therefore would be forced to leave the coast or put over their sick on some other vessel to bring them to the Pescadores

Therefore we have approved and resolved (hearing from the above-mentioned friends that the Commander Cornelis Reyersz is departed from the Pescadores with most of the sick men to Taiwan, so that few sick remain in the Pescadores) to give of the victuals we have for the fleet to the above-named three ships : Ten thousand large apples, ten thousand mikans, twenty pigs, two hundred melons, and three oxen, so that the river of Chinchu shall not, to the damage of the Company, remain unguarded for want of refreshing.

And seeing also that by the captivity of Commander Christiaen Fransz the fleet is deprived of its head, the Council doth hereby provisionally, till further order of the Commander Cornelis Reyersz, place and appoint Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, in all matters which may

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

arise, to call together the council, preside thereover and as before to carry our flag on the mainmast etc

Thus given and attested on the ship *Engelsche Beer*,  
date and year as above Signed by

Isaac van de Wercken

Frans Leendersz Valk

Herman de Coningh

Pieter Fransz

Jan Pietersz Reus

These victuals did hearten our sick in great measure, we held the river so far as possible close and guarded, according to our orders, so that the Chinese could not go out free to the Manillas and other places, we took several of their junks and other vessels

At last I sailed again to the Pescadores and my time being expired and having no mind to bind myself anew, although Mr Cornelis Reyersz did strongly urge me thereto, offering me many good and better conditions than I had before, besides notable increase of salary, I obtained at last after much solicitation that I should go on another ship which lay ready to depart for Batavia, named *de Goede Hope* The Commander Cornelis Reyersz gave us an ample instruction, by which to regulate our ships on the voyage and in encounters with others, among which this short instruction.



# JOURNAL OF

## Instruction

for the persons of the Council of the ship  
*de Goede Hope* sailing from Pehu to Batavia

Whereas it is the desire of our Masters<sup>r</sup> and of the Governor-General, that on all ships authority be given to some person in such affairs as may arise, to call together the council and to preside over the same

Therefore, to this purpose we have approved to appoint Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, captain of the said vessel, who in all matters that may occur in the service of the Company, shall summon the council, preside over the same and have the first voice.

Jan de Moor, Merchant

Jan de Nayer, Mate

Chief Boatswain

Second Mate—the fifth voice.

These above-mentioned persons of the council are strictly enjoined to accomplish the voyage, and also to further the service of the Company with all due diligence and obedience to the ample instructions given in the resolution dated 19th February, anno 1624

Given in the Fort at the Pescadores this day 20th February, 1624

Cornelis Reyersz

The 21st February I set sail with the ship *de Goede Hope* from the Pescadores to Batavia, but with instruction first to cross over to the coast of China, which we

## BONTJES'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

did, but met with a great storm on coming near the coast and found our ship to be so slow to turn that we could scarce put her about with the foreail before the wind. She also did so leak that we must continually stand to the pump, found it therefore inadvisable to stay there longer, but decided to continue our voyage to Batavia. Held off before the wind, 24th and 25th of the same month we passed the islands of Macao, with very variable weather.

The 6th March we came by *de Logelste Beer*, whereof the Merchant was Isaac van de Wercken and Captain Frans Leenders, of Rotterdam. Came on board of us, they related they had taken some hundred and sixty Chinese (men, women and children), whom we following our instructions given us, would take over from them and charged them to stand by, but they declared their ship to be so unseaworthy and leaky that they could scarce hold it above water, and therefore were forced to keep their course to Batavia.

The 8th the Captain of *de Beer* brought two small boats for our refreshing.

The 9th we went aboard *de Beer*, received again two boats, a portion of beans, some pots of oil and other goods.

The 17th we came to anchor under Polepon, here fetched water and took over sixty-four Chinese from *de Beer*. Went also to cut wood.

## JOURNAL OF

The 20th we again set sail.

Between 25th and 26th same *de Beer* was driven away from us.

The 30th we came to anchor under the Man-eaters' island.

The 1st of April we weighed anchor and came next day, being the 2nd April, in the roadstead before Batavia

I then once more made some journeys for stone to the above-mentioned islands between Bantam and Batavia.

I was now resolved at the first opportunity to go to Holland, finding the truth of the proverb the which is proved by experience : every bird returns gladly to the place where he was nested , for whatever splendid countries, coasts and kingdoms a man may sail to and look over ; whatever conditions, profit or pleasures he may enjoy, would be but poor entertainment were we not supported by the hope of once upon a time relating our adventures at home ; for in that very hope do we call our journeyings “ travels ”, otherwisesuch hopeless wanderings would be no better to a man than exile

While I was busied here in carrying stone to and from Batavia (as related) there were three ships to wit : the ship *Hollandia*, *Gouda*, and the ship *Middelburgh* being made ready to return to Patria—which opportunity I laid hold of : I made request to the Governor-General

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

Carpentier and his Council that I might depart therewith, the which was granted They put me as captain on the ship *Hollandia*, being a most finely-equipped vessel Commander Cornelis Reyersz was meantime come from the Pescadores to Batavia with intent to return home, he was made Commander of the three above-mentioned ships, we had him on our ship, he was a dexterous man of much experience, who had done great service to the Company in many things.

Here in Batavia I had speech with my fellow townsman, Willem Cornelis Schiouten, he came on the ship *Middelburgh* to return home in company with us <sup>1</sup>

The 6th February, 1625, we three above-mentioned ships did set sail from Batavia to return home, so it were God's will

Touched in passing at Bantam where several of our ships lay, from them we took a great rope and a foresail, took leave of our friends with a westerly wind, which for us was against the wind We therefore tacked till under the island Sibesí, that lies on the inside of the Strait of Sunda, next to Sumatra We lay there for three or four days waiting for a favourable wind, also because the current ran so strong into the Strait

The 15th, we set sail with the land wind, made a tack and the 16th got outside the Strait of Sunda,

## JOURNAL OF

having the wind westerly. Coursed to the south, with feeble breezes, but the wind freshened from day to day; continued southwards, hoped to get a southerly wind.

The 27th we had the wind from southwards; were at the height of 17 degrees south latitude. Veered then to westward and set our course westerly to the Cape Bon Esperance, till we came to the height of 19 degrees south latitude. We had then S.E. wind which became more easterly as we went; we held westerly with a strong breeze, carrying as much sail as we could.

The 15th March, in the morning having shot the sun in its rising, we found 22 degrees, the north-west shifting of the compass diminishing. This same day our Commander Cornelis Reyersz. became very sick.

The 16th, 17th and 18th it began so fiercely to blow that sailing under a tight-reefed foresail and the spritsail we could not hold our course within eight points of the compass; we feared that in the night we might drift away from one another. And as we carried the signal light, I went to the Commander in the cabin and there called together the ship's council. I said to the Commander, who (as related) lay very sick: "Should we thus continue to sail to-night, I fear by morning we shall have lost one another, for our men cannot keep the ship within eight points. I judge it is best to take in our sails by daylight and let the ship lie

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

at hull, and when our companions see that they will do the same, I trust we shall not this night be scattered so wide but we shall to-morrow be in sight of each other” Thereupon answered the Commander “ If that seems good to you, captain, let us then do so ” The which we did Took in by day our foresail and the sprit-sail, made them fast to the yard, and lay at hull

Our two consorts, to wit, the ship *Gouda* and *Middelburgh*, perceiving that, did likewise took in their sails and lay at hull as we did Veered with our bow over to southward At six glasses of the night the wind began to blow so terrifically hard that to him who has never heard or seen the like it would appear impossible for the wind to have such force The wind was at all points of the compass, for the compass turned round continually so that we could not see how our course lay The ship by the force of the wind sank so low into the water, as it were the wind came on her straight from above, and it seemed that the anchors which hung on the bow came to the water, indeed, we thought the ship was about to sink At last our mainmast was blown overboard and broke about three fathoms above the deck, by which the ship then rose again We stood together with our heads touching, yet could not shout or speak that we could hear one another, that is those who were on deck

## JOURNAL OF

This tempestuous strong wind, which is called a hurricane, continued for about six or eight glasses, then the wind began to lessen. While it blew most fiercely, the sea was smooth as a table because it could not raise itself, but when the wind lessened, the sea rose so mightily that it seemed the ship would turn turtle. The rolling at last sprang a plank under water, whereby we shipped so much water from above, that we were greatly hindered, for the water ran into the hold so that we had seven feet of water in the ship before we knew what had happened, at which we feared the ship was about to sink. Pumped with all our pumps, but the water seemed to be rising in spite of it. At this we were overwhelmed, for it was a hopeless chance. Then the pumps became useless so we could not pump, for the bottom part of the hold was filled with pepper which stopped up the pumps. We had sixty pieces of ordnance both brass and iron that lay in the hold under the pepper which was stored on a platform halfway up the hold, by the rolling of the ship these became loose and with their ears broke through the platform, so that the pepper fell through into the hold, and as the bottom flooring of the hold was forced up by the water, the pepper was all washed into the space underneath it into which the pumps open. Yet as we hoped and trusted that the ship was still whole at the bottom, we did our best to do all we



"The hurricane continued for about six or eight glasses"





## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

could, drew out the pumps and wound pieces of old flags round them at the ends and set those same ends down on the bottom flooring, instead of through it, each in a basket. Then fell again to pumping with all our might, and now the pumps remained clear. We saw immediately that the water lessened, at which we again took courage.

Our blown off mainmast lay clanking the whole night under the bottom and on the side of the ship so that we feared it might make our bottom leak. The men in the hold called out, "Cut away everything that holds it fast and let it drift!" We did what we could, we hauled the standing rigging through to windward but on the lee side, as the ship rolled and swung so mightily, we could not get a foothold, we had to leave it so for the night, but in the day we cut off all we could see and so made ourselves free of the driftage.

In the morning we looked round for our two consorts but missed one of them, to wit the ship *Gouda*, but the ship *Middelburgh* lay to windward of us. She had lost all her masts, with bowsprit, gallion and all, save her mizzenmast. So we were both in a bad way. What was to be done? The ship *Gouda* did not come into sight, we feared she was sunk, and so she was, as we believe, for during the night we drifted through a place where the water was very brown and smoother than in other parts, one or two of the men drew some up with

## JOURNAL OF

a bucket, they said it was pepper ; already then a fear did smite us that all was not well with one or both of our consorts Although ourselves in no very good case, this loss of the ship *Gouda* did sorely grieve our hearts.

The next day the weather became fair The ship *Middelburgh* lay (as said) to windward of us, but we could not come near to one another , we lay both as it were impotent Before daylight the *Middelburgh* put out the yawl and rowed to us, came at daybreak behind our ship under the gallery and called out to us, at which we were marvellously startled for we never expected anybody to be near about us We looked from the gallery and heard it was the yawl from the *Middelburgh*, dropped the man-rope out behind, by which the captain, whose name was Jan Dijke, of Flushing, came over to us with one other. They related their adventures and how they were situated, and we ours likewise to them In a woeful tone they said to us that they had lost all their masts and rigging, and if we could not help them they would never be able to make land We had kept our foremast and bowsprit with the mizzen mast, as also our mainyard , that was because I had our yards hauled down before the wind rose and they had kept their yards up , and had thereby lost their whole rigging We had to make the best of a bad job We therefore resolved to give the *Middelburgh* our

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

mainyard with our foretop mast, and a spar of forty palms which we had in the ship They made sure that so they could put up stumps sufficient to make land. It was also agreed, that when we gave them this, each should do his best to get the first land he could, we set our minds on the Bay of Sancta Lucia in the island of Madagascar

This was thus resolved by the full council in the cabin, and as I was captain, it was for me to give these orders to the men When I came on deck to command, the men rose against me and strongly objected to it, saying "We are in a worse plight than the *Middelburgh*, we will not give it to them" There I stood and looked at them But I spoke with soft words "Men, think what you do, for should we leave the *Middelburgh* here helpless, it is certain she cannot help herself and will be wrecked, for they can make no sail. We are Christian folk, then let us show ourselves Christians. Think what we should desire were we in their place and let us do the same to our fellow-men" I gave them as many good words as I could put together

At last they gathered together, began to put their heads together and said one to the other "What shall we do? We are all even so, Christian men, as the Captain says, and if the *Middelburgh* were lost, what should we have to say?" Whereupon they came

## JOURNAL OF

again to me at the mainmast and said . “ Well, Captain when we have fitted the *Middelburgh* with these things, may we then part company with her ? ” To which I answered : Yes, that it was so resolved in the cabin . At that they let it go : took down the foretop mast and smacked it overboard with the mainyard and the fourteen palm spar . Then the two from the *Middelburgh* took leave of us and rowed to their ship with the stuff behind them, we should find each other again in the Bay Sancta Lucia if God willed it . Then our men asked again : “ May we now part company with them ? ” I said : “ Yes ” . Our foreyard lay on deck, I said : “ Lay hold of the gear of the foreyard and hoist up the foreyard ” . Which they did immediately and ran the foreyard up right to the sheave-hole . Before that it had always seemed almost impossible to hoist the foreyard, but willing hands made short work .

The 22nd we departed from the *Middelburgh* ; we set our course for Madagascar, which was nearest to us, and had sight of land on the 30th . We sailed close under the land , saw where the sea broke on some shallows, that were unknown to us . We were to our reckoning eight or nine miles eastwards of the Bay of Sancta Lucia, feared to go far from the coast knowing we were so damaged, resolved therefore to cast anchor (it was about twenty-five fathom deep) to put out the sloop and row or sail along the coast as was suitable, to

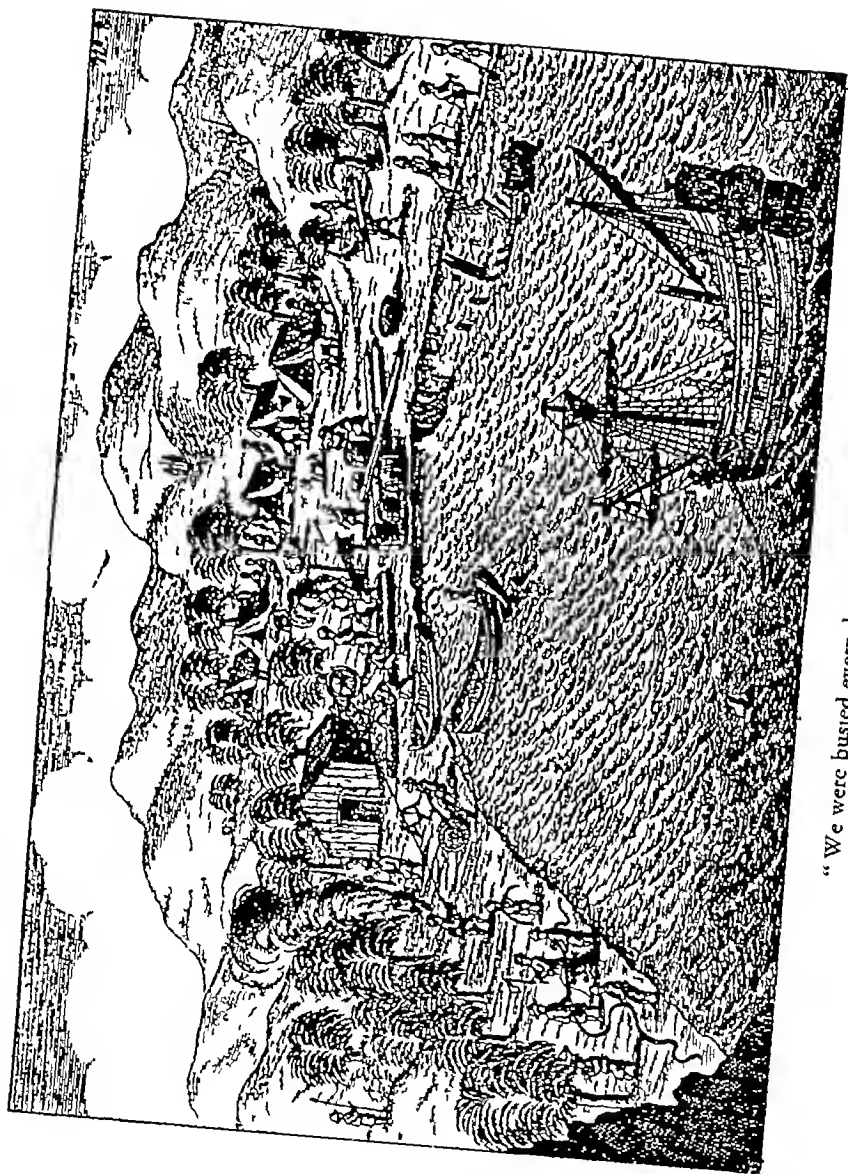
## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

see if we could find the aforesaid Bay Upon this I set off from the ship with the sloop well-manned. Found the aforementioned bay about eight or ten miles from where the ship lay, sounded the islands and depths with the sounding-lead over and over again, and found it was a fitting place for the ship Having done that we returned joyfully to the ship Came the next day back on board and related all that had befallen us Weighed our anchor and sailed thither, brought the ship in with God's help, whereat we all rejoiced greatly and thanked God for His mercy

The 1<sup>st</sup> April we determined to unload the ship and make tents on land to store the goods, and to clear the bottom apertures And as I went with the boat to shore I saw that the sea ran fairly high, therefore I thought it not advisable to bring our lading on land, for there would be peril that both sloop and boat might be broken to pieces For this reason we resolved to clear the hold, and keep the goods in the ship, which we did We carried the lading from the forepart of the ship in racks and filled up the constable's room on the upper deck, and hastily made the forepart of the ship quite empty Put up a partition across the deck at the mainmast so that the goods could not shift towards us from ast, took up the bottom flooring, cleared the bottom space and apertures, put ropes from fore to midway the ship through the apertures to keep

## JOURNAL OF

them clear if by chance they should again stop up. Then we stowed the lading out of the constable's room and upper deck forward again. Having done that we took out the lading from the back part of the ship and put it away in the constable's room and upper deck, and cleared the bottom space and the apertures in that part also. We then hauled the ropes through the apertures from the mast further to the stern part of the ship so that if needful we could pull the ropes backwards and forwards through the apertures. Meanwhile we had speech with the inhabitants. We shewed them that our mast and our rigging were much out of order and asked if there were means to get another mast. They could understand our meaning, and waved us to inland; they went with us and there shewed us suitable trees. Said they would help us in all we needed. I went there with men, ropes, tackle, axes and saws, procured what we wanted, dragged the timber and brought it with much difficulty near the ship. Set our carpenters to work, from the thick end of the timber that was about eighteen palm thick and twenty-eight foot long, we made a piece to fit on the stump of our broken mast; sawed a dovetail in the thickest end and cut our stump which, as related, was broken off  $3\frac{1}{2}$  fathom above the upper deck, to a sharp point, then set on the new piece fitting them together. We then put four fishplates thereon and wrapped that together.



*"We were busied every day to repair our damage*





## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

so that it was a strong taut piece of work Then took our mizzen-top, sawed it through lengthwise and put the sides as far from each other as we would have the top, and filled the opening with planks till the top was a good one.

We were busied every day to repair our damage, in the ship as well as on land We had some irons such as are used on the rope-yards to make rope-work Set one up on land , cut one of our heavy cables in pieces, loosened them and made from them all our running rigging We endeavoured thus to help ourselves as best we could

The news that we were there spread far and wide in the land , thereupon came the inhabitants from far and near, drove their beasts to us and there encamped Put up their tents and brought us everything they had, apples, lemons, citrons and milk, which they first part-boiled before selling it to us for it would not last, but was quickly sour We trafficked with them and bought some of their beasts Their fishers went out to sea and brought us their fish which we bought or bartered with them These people were devoted to us , they shewed us they had enemies in that same country Besought us by signs to help them and they would do all they could for us Here was also wax and honey , they sold us a portion

We understood from them that their king could

## JOURNAL OF

speak Spanish; he lived five or six days' journey from the coast. Sent two of our men to the king to ask if he would sell us some rice; one of them was named Abraham Stevensz, of Flaßing, who spoke good Spanish, with another young man. They came to the King and were well received. Delivered their message and asked to buy some rice. But the king said they had that year been much plagued by locusts who had eaten up most of the rice; which I myself could well believe for I had seen (after walking some way inland, how the locusts rose up off the land as it were in a cloud moving towards me, and flew against my breast and body so thick that I could scarce get my breath. They had wings to fly and being on the ground they hopped after the manner of hopping fowls. The king said they could set as many as three or four hundred men to guard the rice and keep the locusts off it, yet it was of little help. Therefore they had no rice to give us. We saw that the inhabitants took the locusts, pulled off the wings to roast them on the fire and did eat them. Signed us that we should do the same, but we had no stomach for it. The king came down with our two men to the ship; gave us four beasts, for the which we gave him two muskets. He then said to us also that he could spare no rice.

After we had lain here eleven days the Commander Cornelis Reyersz. died and went to rest in the Lord.

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

We buried him on an island (which lies in the entrance of the Bay), well wooded, beneath a fine green tree, the best we could find. He was a good man. To this death the following verses may be applied

Death follows us where'er we go,  
Not one of us escapes his fate  
But when or where doth no man know  
If East or West or soon or late  
He who accepts what God hath sent,  
Be't Life or Death, he is content

Our musketeers shot three times over the grave and from the ship a salute of five shots was fired, we then took our leave of the grave. Started to work again to finish our business with the ship. And as the men often wandered away to seek pleasure more than work, I, knowing the state we were in, admonished them every day with gentle words. "Men, let us do our best to get ready, so that we do not waste our time here, for we are victualled but for eight months and should we spend all our time here and eat up all our victuals, then we'll have to return to Batavia"; and for that, I knew well, they had no mind. So I tried to give them a heart for the work, and instead of to command I was fain to implore, such as more often happens in a like case, for we still had much work to do. It was here with me as with Scipio Africanus, who (as I have heard) was wont to say "I am never less idle than when I am

## JOURNAL OF

idle, and never less alone than when I am alone". For I had in the night enough to do to invent and contrive how by day we should set about making and fitting all things, and so keep each man to his work and give contentment to all, so that in the end they were convinced in their mind, and every man did his best, until the 22nd April; then we were in order again and lay with our yards across, ready to continue our voyage. We brought our water-barrels full of water and our men got as many apples and lemons as each could put in his berth.

The inhabitants of this island were mostly black; some had hair that hung by their heads, others had it curled like sheep's wool. The women had their hair plaited in small plaits round their head, and they smeared it with oil till it shone in the sun; the men mostly did likewise. The greater number had no more than a small cloth round their loins to cover their shame and some went quite naked without shame.

The 23rd we determined to sail the next day at morning with the land-wind, but in that same night, two of our men who had the watch rowed to land with our small sloop and ran away to the blacks, so that we could not find them. At this we were much astonished for they had helped to make the whole ship ready and went away just the last night, and to such barbarous folk too, in whom I could see no knowledge of God or

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

His Commandments One of these deserters was named Hilke Jopkis from Friesland and another Gerrit Harmesz, of Norden. We surmised they had too much traffic with the women, who with their seeming fair promises had drawn their hearts to stay with them, for women are mighty instruments to ensnare men, whereof the examples are unnecessary to recall Think only of Samson, David, and Solomon We saw here many children who were almost white, and whose fair coloured hair hung from their heads, we reckoned these to be begotten of Hollanders who had been in the Bay before us The women were keen to have intercourse with our men, and had there been in this place wine or beer to be sold as well as there were women to be had, we had not so soon accomplished our work But now when they had been with the women, they returned meek as lambs to their work. This I say of many, excepting the well-behaved

By the deserting of these two men our sailing was delayed a day longer, for we went that day on land to seek them, had sight of them, but when they were aware of us they retreated from us and we must needs leave them there

Then the 25th April we set sail with the land-wind, ran to the south with temperate weather till 10th May with a westerly wind, had change of wind and weather with rain, wind very tempestuous from

## JOURNAL OF

W.S.W. Veered then over to northward; found we had not enough press of sail aft to be able to tack into the wind, so we veered before the wind and kept close to the wind to sail to windward of the island of Madagascar. The weather every day increased in strength, with strong W S W. wind, that we were forced to take in our topsails and followed our course above Madagascar till we had sight of land the 28th May named Terra de Natal. Nearing land the weather became fair with clear sky, but the swell was very deep, huge billows coming on from the Cape Bonesperance We then held off from the coast, observed that a strong current ran near the shore which drew us towards the Cape, it was a wonder to see how swift the land passed by us; this gave us hope to double the Cape easily.

In the night we again had intemperate weather with mist and rain, by which for three or four days we ran out from the coast with tight-reefed sails; we had the wind westerly with hollow billows from all points which caused the ship often to shift her limbs that it creaked. Had she not been a strong ship she could never have remained whole. When the weather became a little quieter, we veered again over to northward towards the coast; by reason of the tempestuous weather we could make no reckoning, but kept on our tack till we had sight of land, when it cleared up again. We then took our height and found it 35 degrees, by





## JOURNAL OF

round the point, towards the Church valley where the watering-place is, we saw a Spanish carack lying right before the Church valley. As soon as they saw us they brought out an anchor to the landward, and shortened in close to the shore, and immediately with the boats carried some guns on land and made a battery. We with the ship *Hollandia*, coming near them, ran into a whirlwind, for the coast is very steep and the winds whirled over the land. Therefore we could not reach them for our intention was to board them, cut their ropes and pull them to sea. We could have done this, for she carried her guns so high that with our ship we could have lain under their shot. Had our intent succeeded, we doubted not to have mastered them; but by the said whirlwind we could not get closer than a musket shot to them.

We manned our yawl; sent the Junior-Merchant Herman de Coningh (he was from The Hague) with a peace-flag to them. Seeing that, they hastily manned their boat and came to meet our men in between the two ships. They hailed each other. Asked us from where we came. Our men answered from Java and that we had drifted from our consort and awaited her every hour. Our men asked where they came from, they said from Goa. They asked further (seeing they occupied the watering-place) if they would permit us to come and fetch water, which we had much need of,

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

and having that we should immediately depart. Upon which they shouted. "Anda pero, Anda canaly", with many more abusive words. Then our men returned with the sloop to our ship and related to us what had happened.

Thereupon we at once called the ship's council together to consider what we should do. Resolved that the yawl should at once return and ask if they had determined whether we should come to fetch water or not, and if as before they would not consent thereto, then our men should return to the ship, and we give them so much time to consider as the length of one glass, and if ere it was run out they came and agreed to our request, then we would leave them in peace, and if not we should immediately fire away at them. With this resolution the yawl rowed again to them with the peace-flag. They came again with their boat to meet our men. In their boat stood a monk with a hood on his head, who hailed our men. Our Junior-Merchant De Coningh having said his speech was given a refusal as before. "Anda pero, anda canaly! We do not want to see you here, begone!" Our men coming on board reported this to us. We then let the bell be rung, said our prayers, set a glass of half an hour in the socket and as soon as that same glass had run out and we saw no sign of their coming, we fired at them quickly with demi-cannons, of which we had

## JOURNAL OF

eleven, and shot into the carack so that she shook, for she was easy to hit; their foreship or castle was, so seemed, as high as our fore-top, although we had a ship of 1,000 tons. We continued to shoot at them till they shot little more from the carack, but with the pieces which they had brought on land from the carack and set up on their battery, they shot steadily at our ship and hit her as if they had laid it in by hand. For each shot was one that touched us, two, three, four foot above the water, so that we feared they would sink us; we had several wounded. Among them our second carpenter by name Bokjen, of Dort, had both legs shot off: lived a little time, but died suddenly, by reason of which we could not remain lying there. Resolved to bring out an anchor on the shore-side where a reef lay. We shortened in behind this reef till we were free of their shots from the battery.

We lay so near the coast that one could have thrown a stone on to the land. Then came the night. We summoned all the officers to the cabin, with the steward; inquired of him how much water we still had, and reckoned over how much we required, knowing we had yet to pass the Equinoctial Line, and then it might still be a long time ere we came to Holland. We found accordingly that we could give no more than four mugs a day of water. So we asked the officers, and the officers spoke with the men what they thought—

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

whether they would engage in a life and death fight to have water against the enemy who held the watering-place, or should we continue our voyage home and be content with four mugs of water a day. This question therefore being put to all, it was agreed unanimously by all the officers and the whole ship's crew to continue our voyage and be content with four cups of water a day. Immediately weighed anchor to set sail.

But when it was day, as we were beginning to tow the ship out from the land, the Specks came up on the coast with musket and shot from above down into the ship and at the boat, so that it was scarce to be stood, yet (by God's help) we got off the shore. Had we stayed there another hour, we should have been in great peril to lose many of our company.

This aforesaid carack while lying there was sunk (as was afterwards told me) by reason of our having so hit her. For, some while later there came six Dutch ships to refresh themselves, they saw her lying on the bottom, and the Portuguese had taken her lading, as much as they could, and put it on land, as well as her ordnance which they had put on a battery they had thrown up. From there they shot so lustily at these six ships that they could not come to land, and must therefore, even as we, depart without refreshing.

We set our course to N W., to the island Ascension, with a good wind and quick progress, yet we had no

## JOURNAL OF

sight of it. We saw only, when we reckoned to be thereabouts, a great multitude of sea-fowl. The wind began to increase as much as we could bear, with which stiff wind we passed the *Æquinoctial* Line without hindrance; while on our voyage outwards we were held six weeks ere we could pass it, mostly by calms and then again sudden squalls by which it seemed that all we had on would be blown to pieces.

The 12th September, when we were three days less than three months from St. Helena, we came in the height of 34 degrees 34 minutes north of the *Æquinoctial* Line. We here had better weather, then drifted in a calm; set to work in the morning after breaking fast, clewed up our sails, scraped and scrubbed our ship on the outside, for it was all grown very rough and foul; we hoped thereby to make better sailing.

The 13th it was fair weather with a light breeze from E S.E., went north-east by north.

The 15th, S.S.W. wind, the course as before; took our height in the afternoon and found 28 degrees north latitude. Tore off our fore-sail and put up another.

The 16th we also changed our fore-top sail, saw much rock-weed drifting; course as before with a continual fair S.W. wind.

The 17th we found our height to be 30 degrees 48 minutes; now changed our maintop sail; with variable

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

winds In the night the wind came north-east and east, with thunder and lightning; took in our top sails.

The 18th hoisted our topsails again with our sprit-sail, the course N E It was misty, sometimes with rain, could not take our height

The 19th it began to blow so hard from the S S W and S W. that we took in our topsails and our sprit-sail was blown away Our main-sail that we endeavoured to haul in was torn in pieces That night we held on with the fore-sail, towards day the wind abated, we again hoisted our topsails

The 20th put up another main-sail and a sprit-sail, took our height and found 35 degrees 13 minutes north latitude

The 24th was dark clouds with gusts of rain; took off our top-gallant mast

The 26th we had the height of 43 degrees 12 minutes

The 27th the wind S W, the course N E by N In the forenoon there came a dove flying on to our ship, but the men being so desirous to catch it, it flew up again and fell down in the water Took our height and found 44 degrees 53 minutes

The 1st October the weather was fair, the wind E S E, the course straight across the wind, N E by N Afternoon we took the height of 48 degrees 30 minutes, which is the height of Ushant

## JOURNAL OF

The 2nd day, in the morning, saw a sail north-west of us about three miles ; clewed up our sails and waited for her. Late in the afternoon she came near us, we spoke to her ; it was an Englishman from near Plymouth, came from Newfoundland. We bought from them two thousand fish ; fetched the Captain on board of us, by name Mr Smallwater. Went E. and E by south ; weather became misty with rain

The 4th, the Englishman came again on board of us ; we entertained him with the best we had , our height was 49 degrees 46 minutes

The 5th began to blow hard, our fore-sail was blown to pieces. The Englishman now drifted away from us. The wind was S S W.

The 6th day saw two sails, one at the side of us, one behind Held to S E , to sail the Channel Our height was 50 degrees 20 minutes.

The 7th the weather was fair, wind south, course E.S E , we saw no ships Put up another sail again

The 8th we were in the height of 49 degrees 42 minutes, wind as before, but soon ran west. Set our course S.E. by E , cast our head as we had done some days previous, but could get no ground. Towards evening died Captain Stryker, who had been captain over the soldiers , he was a valiant and worthy man, well-exercised in the art of war , he was from the Rhineland, from Wesel or thereabout.

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

The 10th day at evening, we threw our lead and found ground about seventy fathom

The 11th in the morning we again found ground at seventy fathom, and evening at 60 fathom with grey sand Our height was 49 degrees and 55 minutes, the wind south, set our course E by N and N E

The 12th, sounded on fifty fathom and continued to cast the lead every four glasses Found generally fifty, fifty-two, fifty-three fathom, and at night we found fifty-six to sixty fathom and grey, white and sometimes some black sand Saw also a ship coming towards us ahead, but it grew so misty we lost sight thereof

The next day the wind was east with cloudy misty weather and calm Two or three days later we had sight of land, which we found to be Ireland Ran into Kinsale There lay there an English King's ship with two tiers of cannon, and seeing I had knowledge that the Dutch Company, our Lords and Masters, were in no good friendship with the English<sup>1</sup>, I was doubtful to let the men go in too large numbers on land, fearing to have trouble with this King's ship I therefore cast anchor to seawards of her, thinking "Should she make trouble, we can get away to sea, and should she follow us then we shall have no need to worry" I went on board her, invited the Commander in our ship, he came I asked him of all events, among



## JOURNAL OF

other things if he had any orders to harm us in any way. He answered "No", and was friendly and of good cheer with us. Yet I was not assured; had a feast made ready on shore, invited him thereto and we drank to one another; and in the merry-making of the meal I asked again if he had no orders to molest us. Once more he answered "No", and related that while we lay there he had written to England but received no orders to that intent, yet I dared not put much trust therein.

Meanwhile there came to us two Convoys, who had been cruising to find us, having had knowledge that we lay there. Of the one was captain Jacob Jansz, of Edam, and of the other Pieter Gijzen, of Rotterdam. Thus was our back better protected if it came to the worst.

While thus lying here our men ran so much on shore that I saw little chance of getting them to the ship again. I warned them, whenever I fell in with some of them that they should return to the ship for we ought now to continue our voyage, it was already autumn, the winter was at hand, and we had a foul, unwieldy ship. I did show them the peril there was to bring to land so heavy a ship so late in the year; yet it helped but little, the men stayed on land, it looked as if they were home already, they ate and drank with a will.

I went at last to the Mayor of the town, asked him if there were no means of bringing our men on board. He said no, he knew of none, but when I had spoken

## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

with his wife and presented her with a piece of fine linen, then he said, when I asked him again, that he would soon help me. He immediately caused some drummers to go through the town and call out everywhere that all men be warned, whosoever should give credit for more than seven shillings to any of the Hollanders from the East Indiaman, he would lose his money. On this proclamation, most of them (as their reckoning was already beyond this sum) were thrust out of doors, they came then to me. I wanted to have them at once on board, but they would rather remain a little longer.

Thereupon I caused the anchors to be weighed, the sails unfurled and began to sail out of the bay. Then they fell into sloops and other craft like ants and came on board. The innkeepers and alehouse wives also came on board and demanded their money, the which I gave them and put the sum against each man's reckoning in the book. Now we had all our men again with us, save three or four who had promised themselves to women whom they afterwards married, these we let stay there. We sailed from there with the convoys and came with reasonable speed the 16th November to Zeelandt. The Lord be praised and thanked, Who hath thus far helped me through so many perils, I having been away in all about one month less than seven years.

## JOURNAL OF

Hereby I did intend to bring an end to my writing, seeing that my voyage was accomplished. But as I before related, the ship *Middelburgh* the 22nd March did part from us very damaged, with intent to find each other in the Bay of St Lucia, where we arrived the 31st, and departed therefrom the 25th April, without in that time nor during our whole return voyage having seen or heard of her, nor afterwards ever did she come to safety, so must I (though it doth not of necessity belong to my voyages, and yet is not so far removed from them that the Reader should blame me for enlarging my history with anything strange and unsuitable) inform the said Reader what since the time of our parting has befallen her, according to the most certain tidings and most credible presumption.<sup>1</sup> I the more willingly undertake this task since thereby I shall have cause to relate to posterity the end of our all-famous fellow-citizen of Hoorn, Willem Cornelisz Schouten, my particular friend, which has not reached the ears everyone, for he (as aforesaid) had sailed on the ship *Middelburgh*. The matter is as follows: While we lay in the Bay of St Lucia, we heard from the inhabitants that a ship was lying in the Bay of Antongil, but we knew not for certain if this were the *Middelburgh* or not. On going away from there, we hoped to find her in St Helena or to wait for her there, but by reason of the Spanish carak (as related) we could not come in



## BONTEKOE'S EAST-INDIAN VOYAGE

and how and when they departed therefrom From that time forth no tidings came from them direct, so that here would have been the end thereof but from the Portuguese and from Portugal is later news come to hand, to wit : How that theaforesaid ship *Middelburgh* coming to the island of St. Helena was surrounded by two caracks, against which she put up a brave fight, and shot at least one carack afire Seeing which, the other came to help her consort to put out the fire which they, so it is related, did quench ; but as the Portuguese by this skirmishing feared to be removed from the island, and as the night was at hand, they drifted apart and let the *Middelburgh* go

Such are the last tidings received of this ship ; it is likely that she was lost on her way, and maybe in this fight with the caracks, had already received so much as made her sink It might also be surmised that she was lost through want of victuals and refreshing, but seeing that she had been to the Cape and there refreshed, can scarce believe such to be the case Be it as it may, it is ever a most woeful business that they did not come to safety, and moveth me to eternal gratitude that God so graciously hath saved and preserved me, that is with the ship *Hollandia*, from such apparent perils I pray that His goodness may continue with me from now and ever more, Amen.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> *Page 12* See e.g. W. P. Groeneveldt, *De Nederlanders in China* (Vol. XLVIII of the *Bijdragen uitgegeven door het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1898), p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Page 12* *Id.*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> *Page 12* See p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> *Page 14* Groeneveldt, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> *Page 16* It is possible to obtain a complete view of the enterprise from Groeneveldt's *De Verre-tocht in China*. This work, which was never continued beyond the year 1624, contains Reverte's own official journal and extracts from his and Nieuwenroode's correspondence with Batavia.

<sup>6</sup> *Page 17* Groeneveldt, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

### TEXT

<sup>1</sup> *Page 23* Two of the Cape Verde Islands. They were in the possession not of the Spaniards, but of the Portuguese, between whom Bonteloe never makes a clear distinction, and in fact Portugal, from the conquest in 1560 to the rising in 1640, formed part of the Spanish Empire.

<sup>2</sup> *Page 25* An island group off the coast of Brazil. Ships had to follow a course so far West in order to get the full advantage of the current in the Southern Atlantic.

<sup>3</sup> *Page 28* The island of Mauritius had been taken by the Dutch from the Portuguese as early as 1598 and had been called after Prince Maurice, the Stadtholder. It served as a station on the way to Java, but was abandoned when, in 1651, the Cape had been occupied for the same purpose. The island of Mascarenhas is now called Reunion.

<sup>4</sup> *Page 31* It was a common practice to leave messages of this kind in any of the possible stopping places on the way to the Indies, on

## NOTES

boards or stones Several stones with inscriptions dating from before the occupation in 1651 have been found at the Cape and are preserved in the Museum at Capetown

<sup>1</sup> Page 37 The Strait of Sunda is actually between 6 and 6½ degrees, southern latitude

<sup>1</sup> Page 43 That is to say from Schleswig Germans from Westphalia and from the coastal districts were numerous in the Dutch mercantile marine and in the service of the Dutch East India Company

<sup>1</sup> Page 54 It was probably the island of Engano

<sup>1</sup> Page 59 See the Introduction, p 10 "General" is commonly used instead of the full title "Governor-General"

<sup>1</sup> Page 69 Which of the numerous islands in the Strait of Sunda these three islands were it is difficult to say Possibly the Krakatoa group

<sup>1</sup> Page 71 Willem Cornelisz Schouten of Hoorn was ship's master on Jacques le Maire's voyage round the world (1615-17) In the published journal of that expedition his conduct was unduly praised at the expense of that of Le Maire In reality Schouten seems to have behaved very badly.

<sup>2</sup> Page 71 A Spanish or Portuguese vessel, with a high "castle" aft

<sup>1</sup> Page 72 "Right-in-the-Way"

<sup>2</sup> Page 72 Having passed St Nicholas Point

<sup>3</sup> Page 72 See Introduction

<sup>4</sup> Page 72 Frederik Houtman, brother of Cornelis Houtman, the leader of the first Dutch expedition to the Indies (1595) Frederik, who had sailed with his brother, had in 1605 been made the first governor of Ambona He was a man of parts, an astronomer and editor of a Malay dictionary The former capacity helps to explain his possession of a telescope, at this time still an exceedingly rare instrument.

<sup>1</sup> Page 73 "The Maiden of Dordrecht."

<sup>2</sup> Page 73 Bonteloe omits the dates in this part of his story, but he probably arrived at Batavia before the end of the year 1619 It was only on May 30th of the same year that Coen had taken and

## NOTES

burned down the native town of Jicatra, to found the central seat of Dutch power in the East on its ruins See the Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Page 74 *Boot*—boat

<sup>1</sup> Page 75 Ternate is one of the Molucca islands The fortresses in the Moluccas were the first erected anywhere by the Dutch Company

<sup>1</sup> Page 75 Gresse or Griesk, not far from Soerabaja, the Dutch factory there served largely for the purchase of rice and other provisions needed for the garrisons in the Moluccas

<sup>2</sup> Page 75 Solor is a small island East of Flores The fortress was called Henrius

<sup>1</sup> Page 76 Larantocka is a place on the East coast of Flores

<sup>2</sup> Page 76 *Specks*, a nickname by which Bontekoe indiscriminately indicates Spaniards or Portuguese *Speck* in Dutch means bacon

<sup>3</sup> Page 76 Corracorras, a kind of native vessel

<sup>4</sup> Page 76 Blau Ambelau

<sup>5</sup> Page 76 The inlet is on the North side of the island of Amboina Combello is the point of a peninsula of the island of Ceram The spices were, of course, what took the Dutch to the Moluccas

<sup>1</sup> Page 77 Here meaning the place where the fortress of Victoria stood, in the district of Amboina called Leitumor

<sup>2</sup> Page 77 Maleyen not identified

<sup>3</sup> Page 77 Herman van Speult was the man who, a few years later, in 1623, ordered the execution of the English factors, who were convicted, under torture, of conspiracy against Dutch authority, the affair known as "the Amboyna massacre"

<sup>4</sup> Page 77 A small Molucca island, west of Malmalieu

<sup>5</sup> Page 77 Boeton, an island to the S E of Celebes

<sup>1</sup> Page 78 Little Java Madoera

<sup>2</sup> Page 78 The Thousand Islands

<sup>1</sup> Page 79 The Porpoise

<sup>1</sup> Page 80 Macao was a Portuguese stronghold See Introduction

<sup>2</sup> Page 80 The Manillas The Philippines

<sup>3</sup> Page 80 Balimbam Palembang, now called Banka Strait

<sup>1</sup> Page 81 Polepon, now Singkep





## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Page 114 *Het Wapen van Rotterdam* = the *Rotterdam Arms*  
The text says that each lost 275 men, which seems hardly possible, since the crew of an East-Indiaman did not as a rule number much more than two hundred men

<sup>1</sup> Page 115 The settlement of Dutch "free burghers" was encouraged by Coen, but it was never really desired by the Directors at home, who wanted the Company, through its officials, to monopolise all trade in the East

<sup>2</sup> Page 115 The text has October 25th This must be a misprint  
See Groeneveldt, *op cit*, p 226

<sup>3</sup> Page 115 This Council of seven members, of whom Reyertsz was one, included only one of the masters of the fleet in its number, Bontekoe was not on it See Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Page 116 The Totok was the Commander of the imperial troops in the provinces of Hokkien (Fukien) and Tsetkang

<sup>1</sup> Page 117 The Combon by this word, which seems to be due to defective reading of Chinese, the Dutch indicated the governor of the province of Hokkien (Fukien), who resided at Hookchu (Foochow)

<sup>1</sup> Page 126 Our Masters the usual term to describe the Directors of the Company

<sup>1</sup> Page 129 For Willem Cornelisz Schouten see note to p 71 above

<sup>1</sup> Page 153 The "Amboina Massacre" (see Introduction) had taken place in March, 1623 On August 17th, 1624, the English Ambassador at the Hague had for the first time addressed a complaint about the affair to the States-General On November 2nd, 1624, King James I had issued letters of reprisal against the goods and ships of the Dutch East India Company

<sup>1</sup> Page 156 It was probably Deutel, the printer, with his zeal for the glory of Hoorn, who persuaded Bontekoe to add these particulars about Schouten One seems to detect his peculiar style of writing in this introductory sentence



## INDEX

- Abrolhos islands, 25  
 Amboyna, island, 76, Massacre, 12, 161, 163  
 Amoy, 116, 119, 162, *see also* Chinchu  
 Balimbam, 80, *see also* Palembang  
 Bamboos used for carrying water, 69  
 Banka strait, *see* Balimbam  
 Bantam, 9, 129  
 Batamboer island, 76  
 Batavia, 73, 78, 128, founded, 11  
 Batjan island, 77  
 Birds on Mascarenhas island, 30  
 Blau island, 76  
 Block, Ariaen Maertsz, 31  
 Boeroe island, 76  
 Bontekoe, Jacob Ysbrantsz, 114  
 Bontekoe, Pieter Ysbrantsz, 101, 114  
 Booty, 96, 98, 101, 106  
 Bosschert, 85  
 Brazil, supposed island of, 20  
 Brouwer, Jan Gerritsz, 107  
 Bruys, Hendrick, 105  
 Canary islands, 22  
 Cape Agulhas, 145  
 Cape of Bonesperance, 25, 144  
 Cape of Good Hope, 8, *see also* C of Bonesperance  
 Cape Magelhas, 8  
 Cape Verde Islands, 159  
 Cargoes, *see* cloth, cloves, pepper, stone  
 de Carpentier, Pieter, 15, 114  
 Ceylon, conquest of, 12  
 Champey, coast of, 83  
 China, expedition to, 92, *see also* Chinchu  
 Chinchu river, 89, 92, 96, 115  
 Chinese, captives and colonists, 14, 96, 101-108, 112, 127, encounters with, *see* encounters, junks, *see* junks, negotiations with, 91, 116, pirates, 90, prophecy, 113, treachery, 122  
 Cipzuan, 116  
 Claesz, Jan, 79, 80  
 Claesz, Moses, 122  
 Cloth from the Moluccas, 9  
 Cloves, cargo of, 77  
 Cochín China, *see* Champey  
 Coco-nuts make the starving sailors ill, 55  
 Coen, Jan Pietersz, 10, 59, 73, 78, 80, 114  
 Combello point, 76  
 de Coningh, Herman, 125, 146  
 Cornelisz, Claes, 107  
 Cornelisz, Geleyn, 101  
 Coromandel coast, footing obtained by Dutch on, 9  
 Councils, system of, in Dutch ships 5, 126, 130, 135, 147  
 Craegh, Doede Florisz, 121

# INDEX

- Deserters, 142
- Duetel, Jan Jansz, printer, 1
- Dijcke, Jan, 134
- Dirckz, Ysbrantsz, 24
- Distress of sailors in longboat, 51
- Dodo, *see* birds
- van der Dussen, Abraham, 79
- Dust storm at sea, 24
- East India Company, United Dutch
  - "Chambers" of, 8, formed, 8,
  - hierarchy of, 16, organisation,
  - of, 8
- Eels, manner of catching, 32
- Emden, Tobias, 78
- Encounters with Chinese, 93, 97,
  - 101, 104, 105, Indians, 65,
  - Portuguese, 86, Spaniards, 23,
  - 145
- Enforced settlement of Batavia by
  - Chinese, 14
- England's End passed, 19
- English, co-operation with, 11,
  - expeditions to Moluccas, 9
- Fire, in the *Nieuw-Hoorn*, 38, of
  - the sea, 24, *see also* junks
- Flying fish, 51
- Formosa, 88
- Fransz, Christiaen, 115, 119
- Fransz, Pieter, 125
- Gerritsz, Pieter, 115, 157
- Gijsen, Pieter, 154
- Goa, attacked by the Company's
  - fleets, 9
- Gresse, 75
- Gulls, method of catching, 25
- Gulls, method of catching, 25,
  - caught by starving sailors, 49
- Harmesz, Gerrit, 143
- Het Lam, 77
- Hieto inlet, 76
- Hodden, Walter, 75
- Hooghlandt, 79
- Hoorn, 1, 8
- van Houdaen, Willem, 121
- de Houtman, Cornelis, 7
- Houtman, Frederick, 72, 77
- Hurricane, very severe, 132
- Idelemo, 87
- Ile dee Foge, 23
- Ile de Mayo, 23
- Ireland, 153
- Jacatra destroyed, 11
- Jansz, Jacob, 154
- Jansz, Jan, 96
- Jambi, 78, 79
- Java reached, 72
- Jopkis, Hilke, 143
- Junks, fire-, 122, set on fire, 92, 96,
  - 97, 99, war-, 103, 104
- Kinsale, 153
- Kiuhang-Ici, *see* Chinchu river
- Lanquyn island, 89
- Larantoeka, assault on, 76
- Laur island, 82
- Locusts, plague of, 140, manner of
  - eating, 140
- Longboat, voyage in, from Sunda
  - strait to Sumatra, 44-58
- Macao, assault on, 85, 127,
  - expedition to, 12, 80
- Madagascar, 27, 36, 136, inhabi-
  - tants of, 139, 142

# INDEX

- Malabar coast, conquest of, 12
- Malacca, attacked by the Company's fleets, 9, conquest of, 12
- Malle bay, 84
- Man-eater's island, 124
- Manilla island, 40
- Mascarenhas island, birds of, 30, landing on, 28
- Mauritius island, 28, 159
- Mertis, Jaep, 79
- Moluccas, 9, 77
- de Moor, Jan, 126
- Mozambique, 9
  
- de Naeyer, Jan Gerrit, 102, 126
- Natives of Madagascar, 139, 143
- Santa Maria, 35, Sumatra, 48
- Navigation without compass, of longboat, to Sumatra, 45-56
- van Neck, 79
- Negapatam, conquest of, 12
- Nieuwenrode, 17, 99, 105
  
- Paddis, 75
- Paderan bay, *see* Malle bay
- Palembang, 78, 79
- Palm tree tops used for food, 69
- Patronymics, use of, in Holland, 6
- Pehu occupied, 13
- Pepper, cargoes of, 78, 79, shipments of, from Java and Moluccas, 7, stops up pumps, 130
- Pescadores, 87, 91, 113, 125, evacuated, 16
- Piet, Jan, 33, 45
- Pirates, Chinese, 90
- Plymouth passed, 19
- Pole Candore island, 82
- Pole Cecir island, 82, 84
- Pole Timon island, 82
  
- Polepaniang island, 82
- Polepon island, 81, 127
- Portuguese, colonies, 7, 9, *see also* encounters
- Prince flags, 91, 162
  
- Raemburgh of Enckhuysen, 75
- Reus, Jan Pietersz, 122, 125
- Reyeritsz, Cornelis, 12, 80, 87, 115, 125, 126, 129, 130, 140
- Rol, Heyn, 28, 39, 40, 45, 53, 74, 77
- Santa Helena, 145
- Santa Lucia bay, 27, 136
- Santa Maria island, landed on, 34
- people of, 35, religion of, 36
- Schouten, Willem Cornelis, 71, 129, 156, 160
- Settlers, Dutch, 115
- Sextant, improvisation of, 47
- Ships, captained by Bonteloe, *Bergen-Boot*, 74, *de Golde Hope*, 125, Groningen, 79, report on by Nieuwenrode, 17, *Hollandia* 129, *Nieuw-Hoorn*, 7, 19, destroyed by fire and explosion, 38
- Ships, Dutch, *Bier-en-Broodtpot* 157, *de Bruynvis*, 79, *de Engelsche Beer*, 82, 96, 97, 123, 127, *Enckhuysen*, 22, 26, *Erasmus*, 115, 119, *de Galias*, 85, Gouda, 128, 133, *de Gouden Leeuw*, 91, *de Haan*, 84, *Haerlem*, 101, *de Hoop*, 85, 87, *de Maeght van Dordrecht*, 73, *Mauritius*, 114, *Middelburgh*, 128, 133, 156, *Morghenstar*, 75, *Muyden*, 115, 119, 120, *Neptunc*, 75, *New-Zeelandt*, 22, 26, *Palicatten*

# INDEX

- 87, *St Cruys*, 84; *St Nicolaes*  
82, *Samson*, 91, 115, *Sincka-  
Pure*, 91, *de Trou*, 87, *Victoria*,  
92, 96, 115, *het Wapen van  
Hoorn*, 115, *het Wapen van  
Rotterdam*, 114
- Ships, English, King's ship at  
Kinsale, 153, *The Bull*, 85,  
with cargo of fish from New-  
foundland, 152
- Sibesí island, 129
- Sipke of Enchuysen, 79
- Smallwater, Mr, 152
- Solor island, 75
- Sonck, Dr, 15
- Spaniards, hostility of, 23, 145
- "Specks," *see* Portuguese and  
Spaniards
- Speult, 77
- Stone from the Thousand Islands,  
78, 128
- Stryker, Captain, 152
- Sugar palms, 32
- Sumatra, 56, 80, 129, inhabitants  
of, 65
- Sunda strait, 37, 129
- Sybrantsz, Teunis, 47
- Taiwan or Tayowan, 16, 88
- Ternate island, 75
- Terra de Natal, 26, 144
- Texel, 7
- Thysz, Abraham, 84
- Tijsz, Pieter, 22
- Totok of Amoy, 116, 119
- Tristan d'Acunha, 25
- Turtles found and eaten, 29,  
method of hatching, 32
- Van Diemen and Maetsuycker, 12
- Van Kniphuysen, Hermen, 43
- Valk, Fransleendersz, 125, 127
- ven de Wercken, Isaac, 125, 127
- Zeelandt, 155
- Zuiderzee, shallowness of for ship-  
ping, 8

The task of tracing the origin of the Epics is beset with difficulties. History in the strict modern sense of the word is not known to have existed in the Vedic or post-Vedic period. The first glimmering of anything like historical accounts appears in the Indian Epics themselves, and though it is difficult to separate the chaff from the grain, yet some connected accounts may be culled from the Epics. It is for this that the accounts of events of the Epic and post-Epic periods may be hazarded with some degree of certainty, but those of the pre-Epic periods, resting as they do purely on inferences based on circumstantial evidence, cannot be asserted authoritatively.

The Indian Epics are more records of Indian religious developments than of chronological events. From the available mass of evidence—Vedic, Upanishadic, Pauranic, etc—it seems reasonable to infer that religion or worship in the Vedic and pre-Epic periods was only ritualistic and consisted only in the performance of religious rites, austerities, ablutions, offerings and sacrifices. Love of God, attachment to the Almighty Father, or delight in singing His praises formed no part of their religious creed. The Bharat Savitri, which Vyasa preached to his son, Sukdeva, contains reference only to the observance of religious rites, pursuit of success and attainment of desires, as the *summum bonum* of their creed\*. This Bharat Savitri has been repeated and explained in the great Epic, times out of number, at the time of bereavements of kings and Rishis, and this formed the key-note of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata. Narada gave good advice to his father-in-law, the king Sinjoya, when he lost his son, and so on. It soon became evident that the worshippers of Vedic deities came to the conclusion that there was no predicate in the human language worthy of God and the Upanishad spoke of Him with words of 'No' 'No', i.e., they rejected one after another, all that was chosen to represent God. The Epic must find an echo of it in its lessons by examples. This was not the only stage of peculiar human progress of the mind in India.

The pro-ritualistic proclivities of the age brought forth a compendium of liturgical rules and rules of conduct for the kings, priests and the people in the Bharata Samhita. The maxims and rules instead of being presented as dry aphorisms and harsh injunctions, were set off against the pleasing background of parables and legends of kings, priests and the people, with the result that the rules and maxims easily appealed to the imagination of the people and, by trying to imitate and emulate the examples set out in the Samhita, they instinctively followed the rules and maxims inculcated therein. Thus the Bharata Samhita

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\* The Mbh Swargarohan Parva, Chapter V





"Living on the side of that foremost of mountains, Mahadeva of great vows scorched the gods greatly. At the foot of these mountains, in a retired spot, Parashara's son of great ascetic merit, viz., Vyasa, taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were the highly blessed Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Jaimini of great wisdom and Paila of great ascetic merit. Shuka went to that charming asylum where his father, the great ascetic Vyasa, was living surrounded by his disciples."

Thereafter, during king Janmejaya's Raj Suya sacrifice this Mahabharata was recited.

From the short Bharata Samhita† to the full-fledged Epic Mahabharata was not a matter of a few years. Several decades or centuries might have intervened between their respective compositions. Religion or worship of God, as foreshadowed in the Epics, still consisted in the performance of rites and ceremonies and prayers to God for granting of boons, fulfilment of desires and attainment of success. Love or attachment for God is faintly foreshadowed in the love of Draupadi, but still it is very imperfectly traceable in the Epics. To depict the God-head and to make Him attractive and loveable, the conception must be all comprehensive, and the more the conception approximates our own human feelings and sentiments, the more it appeals to our sentiment and love. Vyasa saw that in depicting God and inculcating the forms of his worship, there was this defect, that he had left out the factor of love and had not made Him loveable. He was therefore not satisfied with his production, i.e., the Mahabharata.

In the Mahabharata, which he had composed for degraded Brahmins, Sudras and females, who could not understand and read the Vedas, he had depicted the God Narayana attainable through knowledge, which was not suitable for them. He was therefore not content with the Mahabharata and sought the advice of the celestial Rishi Narada, when he appeared before him. Narada told him that simple performance of religious rites and ceremonies, without singing of God's praise, could not bring real contentment. He advised him, by recounting his own previous life's experiences, that singing of God's glory would create attachment and love for God, which alone would bring him peace of mind and fulfil his desire, and he exhorted him to write a book singing God's glory and praise. This led to Vyasa composing the Bhagabata. The Mahabharata did not sing the praise of Krishna, nor did it glorify him as a god. The Bhagabata Gita did, and first supplied the elements of love or Prem in worshipping God. And the Harivamsa too, was composed to supply the omission in the Epic about Krishna's divinity. From this it will be clear that the Bhagabata was not an integral part of the Mahabharata, but was an entirely different and subsequent pro-

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\* Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXVIII page 520 versus 24-27

† See Appendix "B"

duction in which Vyasa's authorship of the Mahabharata and the Bhagabata is unambiguously acknowledged

Apantaratama was another name of Vyasa and he was said to have sprung from the God Narayana. Vyasa inculcated the worship of Swagun Brahma (i.e., God endowed with active attributes) in the Mahabharata and the Bhagabata. This is why God Narayana is represented as having killed the demons Madu and Kaitab in Hayagraba form (Horse-faced), i.e., in a Swagun form, as he could not have done it in His Nirguna form, which is unaffected by feelings. This perhaps preceded the age when Avatars or incarnations appeared. If Hayagraba had been an Avatar, like the Nrisingha (man-lion) form of God, it would have found a place in the category of the different Avatars. It appears that Brahma performed a sacrifice for the destruction of Madhu and Kaitaba, and in the ceremony a horse was sacrificed. This, in course of time, gave rise to Aswamedha sacrifice (horse sacrifice) in which Narayana was worshipped.

The sacred writings described the horse as being "bathed and decorated with rich trappings, the variously coloured goat being before him." The goat is killed first that it may make known to the gods that the horse is coming to them. Three times the horse is led around the sacrificial fire. He is then bound to a post and immolated with an axe. His flesh is roasted on a spit, boiled and made into balls and eaten by all who have assisted at the sacrifice.

There is a most graphic and detailed account of the ceremony in two hymns of the Rig Samhita (I, 162 and 163). These describe the slaughtering and burning of the horse with a naked realism that is almost horrible. Yet they also address the soul of the horse in mystic strains, recognising it as identified with the gods through the sacrifice, as even on earth it had been their symbol.

The horse was considered one of the most valuable articles of wealth among the Indo-Aryans. The well-known mythology of the early Aryans that the horse was churned out of the ocean by the Dayas and Asuras, only testifies to the estimation in which the animal was held by them. The story is related in the Mahabharata of the sage Calava paying as honorarium to his master Visvamitra 600 horses, which the latter demanded from his pupil on the completion of the latter's studies. The quarrel between the sage Bamadeva and the king Sala, son of Parikshit, which is narrated in the Mahabharata (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 114), was occasioned by Sala's refusing to make over the two horses which he had taken from the sage. The king Sala and his brother Dala, who succeeded him to the throne, were both killed by

Bamadeva, because neither of them would hand over to him the two horses which were his property. The great sage Chyavana would only accept a cow from the great Nṛhṣa in preference to all other gifts which the king was prepared to bestow on him.

These stories illustrate the importance in which horses and cows were held by the Aryans in ancient India. They represented the most valuable articles of wealth to kings and sages alike. It is probable that the importance of the horse preceded in point of time that of the cow, and points to a period of civilisation when people lived by hunting. This epoch was succeeded by the age when agriculture and dairy farming became the chief means of livelihood of the people.

The following extracts from the Samkhya Sūtras (xvi-1) throws some light on the literature which the Brahmins possessed in addition to what we are accustomed to call the Vedas. Incidentally, it also supplies one with the key to unlock the treasure house of the Mahābhārata, and leads one straight into its earliest stratum, the original theme which was developed into its present mighty structure.

"At the Horse Sacrifice, the Adharyu calls upon singers who sing to the lute (Vinaganaginas), and invites them to celebrate the king who then performs the sacrifice, together with other virtuous kings of old. On the first day of the sacrifice the priest tells the story, which begins with Manu Vaisvata. As the people of Manu were men and there are men present at the sacrifice, the priest teaches them the householders by telling this story. He then says 'the rich verses are the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites a hymn.

"On the second day he tells the story which begins with Yama Vaisvata (from the Satapatha), as the people of Yama were the fathers and there were fathers present he teaches the elders by this story. He then says 'the Yajurveda is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites an Anuvaka 'Aśvamedhika' of the Yajur.

"On the third day he tells the story which begins with Varuna Aditya. As the people of Varuna were the Gandharvas, and as they are present, he teaches the young and fair youths by this story. He then says, 'The Atharva veda is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Vaishaja, a work on medicine.

"On the fourth day, he tells the story which begins with the Soma Vaisnava (from the Satapatha). As the people of Soma were the Apsaras, and as these were present, he teaches the young and fair maids by this story. He then says, 'The Angirasa Veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites the Ghorā, another work of the Atharvanikas.

"On the fifth day he tells the story which begins with Arbuda Kadraveya. As the people of Arbuda were the Sarpas or the snake charmers he teaches the Sarpas or the snake charmers by this story. He then says, 'The Sarpaśvidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Sarpaśvidya.

"On the sixth day he tells the story which begins with Kuvera Vaisravana. As the people of Kuvera were Rakshasas, and as these were present, he teaches the Rakshasas or evil doers, by this story. He then says 'The Rakshasvidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Rakshasvidya.

'On the seventh day he tells the story which begins with Asita Dhanyava. As his men were the Asuras and as these were present, he teaches the usurers (Kusidin) by this story. He then says 'The Asura-vidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and performs a trick by sleight of hand.

'On the eighth day he tells the story which begins with Matsya samvada. As his men were the creatures of the water and as these were present, he teaches the Matsyas (fishes) or the fishermen, by this story. He then says 'The Itihasa-Veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites an Itihasa.

'On the ninth day he tells the story which begins with Parakhyai vai pasyata. As his men were the birds and as these were present he teaches the birds, or the young students (Brahmacharin), by this story. He then says 'The Purana veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites the Purana.

'On the tenth day he tells the story which begins with Dharma Indra (from the Satapatha). As his men were the gods, and as these were present, he teaches the young, learned and poor priests by this story. He then says 'The Samaveda is the Veda, this is the Veda' and sings the Sama.

"It is full of the flames of sacrifice, in fact it contains innumerable allusions to the performance of sacrifice and is familiar with all the ceremonies connected with it."

In the days of the Rig Veda, God was apprehensible but not comprehensible, when it became so, by the progress of culture and education, then the performers' taste, devotion and inclination made it imperative to divide the distinct functions of the Vedic religion and to amplify it where necessary. Sanatkumar and Narada were the authors of the Narayana section spoken of before, and Apantariksha came out of darkness not as any maker of Vedic hymns, but became distinguished as the arranger of the hymns and rituals, and received the epithet of Veda-Vyasa. He occupied a position analogous to that of Bhishma to the Kuru family, as a grand-father, at a later age.

The intense love expressed in the music of Vedic languages is found in Sama Veda, the intricacy of Vedic formula, worship of sacrifices, are compiled in due order in Yajur Veda, and the mystic magical powers were comprised in the Atharva Veda. This was the arrangement made in Vedic literature for the convenience of the general public—sacrifices instead of personal sacrifice for individual selfish ambition and success. But when that failed to create the desired effect on the public mind and devotional spirit, then Bharata Samhita was compiled and recited at the sacrifices to illumine the general public. It was not until the ten Upanishads received the appellation of Maha or Mahat that the idea of enlarging the Bharata Samhita was conceived. The scope of this word was far more comprehensive in the days of Panini, when it was considered to mean eternal. The name 'Mahabharata' has a clear connection with Mahatva of Samkhya Philosophy, as well as with the greatness of

the glorious kings and sages in their sacrifices for the general public. What history the Epic represents has survived because, at that time poetry alone pleased the people, just as it is now composed mainly for that purpose. It is not exactly a case of the survival of the text in Epic poetry, but of what pleased and suited the taste of the many for its survival.

Professor Max Muller's words will convey my meaning.—

'Memory and oral tradition are indeed wonderful keepers of popular poetry, and when once certain productions of that popular poetry have been recognised and invested with a sacred authority, I do not hesitate to say that poems are safer in the memory than in manuscripts. But there are certain influences in the first gathering and in the later adaptation of popular poetry to changing popular tastes, which justify us in saying that in one sense the poetry of the people is not the work of one poet, but the result of the combined labour of many popular poets and many popular critics.

"Facts, however, are stronger than arguments. I have seen Hindus who knew the Veda by heart and who could detect by ear any misprint or any false accent, in my edition of the Rigveda. As to the possibility of composing long poems without writing them, I shall not argue like a lawyer and point out that Homer, if he was blind, could not possibly have written the Iliad and the Odyssey, but could only have dictated them, always supposing that writing had been known at his time. But what concerns us is that among the peasants of Finland among people ignorant of reading and writing, large fragments of epic poetry have been discovered during the first half of our century, entirely preserved by oral tradition, never written before, either by the poet or by his admirers and not easily fitted together into one epic poem. I wish I had time to explain to you the process by which these poems had been preserved, and at last have been collected, printed, critically edited, and translated. But I think you will have seen, even from these short remarks, in what sense popular poetry, such as the Homeric poems for instance, may be said to reflect not only the thoughts of one poetic mind, but at the same time the thoughts of many people who would not have listened to that is to say, who would not have allowed any poetry to survive, except what they themselves approved of."

The exact date has not yet been ascertained conclusively, but it seems to be certain that the period in which the Indian Epics grew out of the Bharata Samhita and attained that degree of perfection to which Vyasa and Valmiki brought them, must be before the Grecian Epic of Homer, 1,000 B.C. The art of writing in India was known long before it was in any other part of the world. The Greeks learnt the practice of multiplying copies of books by transcription for public sale and introduced it in their country in 500 B.C. Athens had a special market-place for selling books, and it developed into a regular book fair in the process of time. The old lays of the Deva and Asura fight, handed down by oral traditions, were fixed by means of writing in the Bharata Samhita. This is the Britta Gita recited in the Mahabharata.

The Bharatī Sāmhitā is directly connected with the R̥gveda, whatever links it up with the hymns and metaphysics of the R̥gveda, should be esteemed to be the earliest portions of the Mahābhārata, i.e., they constitute the integral parts of the Bharatī Sāmhitā

One finds distinct mention in the combined R̥k Verse X 167 4, by Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, that the river Sindhu was made fordable by them and they demonstrate that from Central India people went to the Punjab and Vasistha lived in the Punjab, where the king Śambarana took refuge when he was defeated by the Panchala king mentioned in the Mahābhārata. The chant of Pṛthu, son of Vena, shows how he got supremacy over animals (*vide* Panchavimsa Brāhmaṇa, pages 325/6). It is evident that in the Vedic age wife, children and domestic animals used to give great support to householders. Kings sought the co-operation of the chiefs of the people as much as the help of the cattle and domestic animals to rule the country, marriages became a necessity not only for race propagation, but also for the secondary necessity of receiving this support.

Bṛhaspati's chaplainship of the gods and the merit of giving fees in cows and horses are mentioned as follows —

"Nine versed agnistoma (1) "

"As its morning service when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited, he assigns eleven (cows) as sacrificial fee, at the midday service (when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited) he assigns (eleven) (cows) with a horse as twelfth. Both these groups (of eleven and twelve) he separates (from all the dakṣina-cows that stand together to the south of the sacrificial ground and he gives them to the officiating priests), at the afternoon service (he assigns) eleven (cows, when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited), and he gives them at the barren cow (i.e., when this cow destined for Mitra and Varuna, has been immolated). The so-called Narasamsa cups are deposited five times during the whole rite, see C II 147 a 153 (Morning service) 189 b 197 (Midday service), 230 b (afternoon service). In our text the first of each (147 a and 189b) and the last (230 b) are meant. The last eleven cows are given after the rite described in C II 256. Usually the dakṣinas are given at the midday service (C II 191). The Jaiminī Br ('Auswahl' No 130) commends other methods of dividing the dakṣinas (2) " "These make thirty three dakṣina (cows), there are thirty three deities, he reaches the deities. The horse is the thirty fourth of the dakṣinas, Prajapati is the thirty fourth of the deities (Cp. X. I 16), he reaches Prajapati (3) " "This is the consecration (Aśva is an ekaha with which a consecration, an anointing obhiṣeka, is connected) of Bṛhaspati. Bṛhaspati desired to obtain the chaplainship (the office of Purohita) of the Gods. He performed this (sacrifice) and obtained the chaplainship of the Gods (4) " "He who knows this obtains a chaplainship (5) " "It is the consecration as chief judge (the Sthapati was probably a Valsya. Some texts (T Br and Kath) describe a śava, which is designated by Baudh. (XVIII 3) and Ap. (XXII 25, 25) as vaiśyaśava or sthapatishava. Laty VIII 7 10, 'Whom they put at their head, amongst these he should henceforth lead a friendly disposed life (?; differently the commentary, but cp. Laty VIII, 12.1. Ksatrarvrittim vartayet) and they should call him Sthapati' 'Nidāna sūtra purodhakamayajna uttarah sthapatishava va, samanab sraisthye samvṛtīran). He whom they consecrate for the office

of a chief judge should perform this (sacrifice) (6) " "He who knows this gets an office as chief judge (7) " "He is sprinkled (i.e., inaugurated) (whilst sitting) on a black antelope-hide. This (hide) is visibly the priestly lustre (according to TS VI 1 3 1, the black antelope-hide is identical, by its white spots, with the Rigveda, by its black spots, with the Samaveda, according to T Br II 7-3 3, it is the form of the Brahman, of *re* and *saman*), he is inaugurated on priestly lustre (8) " "

This explains why the great priests' births were ascribed to Mitra and Varuna rather than their actual births. Spiritual life was then taken to be the real birth. But the power of the priests and the celebration of sacrifices received a rude shock from the great Kapila in his new philosophy.

The hermitage of Ayoddhaumya, with which the Mahabharata begins, is one of the earliest types of religious institutions where the three Vedas were taught, and plays an important part in the development of Indian thought and religion. The pupils of Ayoddhaumya were Vedic sages. Both Gautama and Uddalaka-Aruni were interested in the new philosophy of the Kshatriyas. The former was the founder of a new system of education, since he realised that the hardships through which students passed in the school of Ayoddhaumya were unnecessary for the purpose of higher education, and he may be said to have developed a new system of education of which the university of Saunaka became the best exponent. He abolished the course of physical hardship as unnecessary for intellectual and moral education.

Now it is quite evident that a new school of thought had come into existence in the later Vedic period. The sacrifices with which the Vedic hymns were connected had become too expensive for the kings. In fact, there is ample evidence in the Mahabharata that they financially ruined not a few of the rulers who performed them. The Brahmin priests charged ruinous fees at these sacrifices, and considered these as the only means for repairing their fallen fortunes. Complication of rituals, necessitating repetition of the formulas without the slightest deviation from those laid down, grew apace with the desire to extort as much money from the kings as the priests could. The only reward that was held out to the kings was that of heaven, but this sordid, other-world worldliness on which the priests banked, was carried too far, and it resulted in a widespread revolt on the part of the Kshatriya princes.

But the Brahmins had alliances with the important non-Aryan communities and also with the subjects of the king who liked the performance of these sacrifices, not only because festivals were always popular, but also because many of those who came to attend these sacrifices were fed free of cost at the expense of the kings. The kings therefore could

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\* Pancavimśa Brahmana, pages 465-66, Chap. XVII 11



not openly protest, but were driven to the necessity of also thinking deeply on spiritual matters and evolving a metaphysical system by which they could meet the Brahmins on their own ground. The Brahmins had developed almost a complete and an almost ununderstandable liturgy. The Kshatriyas brought out a philosophical system as difficult for the ordinary people to understand.

Now the Brahmins were completely out-witted. The Brahmin sages, of whom the most important were Goutama, *alias* Vedā, and Uddalaka Aruni, both disciples of Ayoddhannmya, threw off their pretensions of intellectual superiority and approached the Kshatriya princes for learning their esoteric doctrines on Atman and Paramatman. Now it is quite open to any person to object to this explanation of the inner significance of the Upanishad on the ground that the philosophical doctrines embodied therein are of such a sublime nature that they cannot be explained by material reasons. But those who have followed the processes of historical evolution will admit that the deepest and profoundest thought of the human mind is the reflection either of a material change or a material want.

Dr Winternitz, as also many other scholars, has pointed out the Kshatriya origin of the speculations contained in the Upanishads.

"In the Upanishad, however, we are repeatedly told that kings or warriors are in possession of the highest knowledge, and that Brahmins go to them for instruction. Thus the Brahmin Gautama, father of Svetaketu, goes to King Pravahana in order to be instructed by him concerning the Beyond. And it is related that the desire of Gautama was very awkward for the king for the doctrine which he had to proclaim had never before penetrated to the Brahmins and therefore it is that in all the worlds the mastery has fallen to the share of the warrior class. Finally, however, the king does impart the doctrine to him,—and it is the doctrine of transmigration, which here, where for the first time it appears clearly and distinctly, proves to be a doctrine which emanated from the warrior class, and was originally foreign to Brahmanical theology.\* Another passage proves that the chief doctrine of the Upanishads too, the doctrine of the Atman, the all one, originated in non brahmanical circles. Here five highly learned Brahmins betake themselves to the wise Uddalaka Aruni, in order to learn from him the doctrine of the Atman. He, however, thought to himself 'The great and learned scholars will question me, and I shall not be able to reply to everything. Well, I will direct them to someone else.' And he directed them to King Asvatathi Kaikeya, to whom they actually went for instructions†"

The university life of Naimisharanya, which is described in the Adikanda of the Mahabharata, in the questions and answers, shows a much more developed culture than the earlier system in which the great

\* Chandogya—Upanishad, V-3, Bhadaranyaka Up., VI 2. In the Kausitaki Up., I the Kshatriya Citra instructs the "first of the priests," Aruni, about the Beyond.

† Dr Winternitz's "History of Indian Literature" pp 230-31. Chandogya-Up., V II ff. A version of this narrative is already to be found in Sat., X. 6 I.

Vedic sages could only take two or three disciples. This stage is described very vividly in the Pausya Parva. The sages and their disciples mentioned in this connection are all composers of Vedic hymns. The university of Naimisharanya, in which Saunaka is described as the Chancellor (Kulapati) of education, centres round the performance of a twelve years sacrifice. He is also the examiner who sets questions to Souti, and the answers which the latter gives are not for the information of Saunaka, but are given with a view to show the progress Souti, son of Romaharshana, has achieved in the Vedic lore and practice in which he has received instruction. Where the answers are wrong, Saunaka merely corrects him with a smile\*.

The names of the disciples of Ayoddhaummya are mentioned as composers of Vedic hymns and were necessarily separated from the age of Janmejaya II by a long interval of time. In the period of the Mahabharata the university life was much more developed than in the times of Nahusa, Yayati and Janmejaya, the grandson of Yayati. Ayoddhaummya has been wrongly assumed to be a near relative of Dhaummya, the priest of Yudhisthira, but this is transposing the two names in an inverted order. If Dhaummya's father was Astika and his brother was Debala of Jaigisabya, whose disciple he became to reach the goal. Ayoddhaummya, being the preceptor of three pupils who later on became three great sages—two of them are distinguished in Vedic literature as composers of hymns—must be assigned to the early period of Janmejaya I, the grandson of Yayati.

The Bharata Samhita, however, has connection with the less developed form. The Ashrama of Ayoddhaummya is the prototype of later universities. The great sage Veda, who was no other than Gautama†, was one of the three disciples of Ayoddhaummya. Now Gautama was a contemporary of Saudasa and Janmejaya. This Janmejaya could not be Janmejaya II the son of Parikshit, the son of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna. There were several Parikshits and Janmejayas confused in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata line of kings. The Janmejaya mentioned as a contemporary of Gautama, whose disciple he was, could only be the grandson of Yayati.

In the Pausya Parva, Gautama is mentioned as Veda. The great resemblance of Veda with Gautama in the Utamka Anugata, in Asvamedha Parva, and in the incidents of their lives gives reasonable ground to conclude that they were identical. But Gautama was not Deerghatama Gautama, father of Kakshivat, for this Gautama married Ahalya, twin sister of Divo Dasa, king of Benares, a composer of Vedic

\* See Adikanda, Mahabharata. † See Asvamedha Parva Utamka Anugata.

hymns and the father of Indian medical science. The daughter of Gautama and Ahalya was married to Utamka.

There can be no doubt that the current Mahabharata commences with the story of the snake sacrifice of Janmejaya. Utamka came to the king to unite him against the snakes and their king, Takshaka, who stole the Kundala given to him by the king Saudasa or Pausya, the Ikshvaku king of Ayodhya. It was at the instance of Utamka that Janmejaya undertook the sacrifice. The legend of Utamka is the main theme of Pausya Parva. Is it not a little curious that in it occurs the mention of fire in its early form of horse, and the mention of Atma and Paramatma in the forms of two women? The subject matter contained in this section of the Adikanda is further elaborated in the Bana Parva etc. Many things connected with this legend, which are treated in an unintelligible manner in Pausya Parva, reappear in a clearer form in the later version.

The important question of anachronism could not be overlooked. Utamka who was a contemporary of Brishadeb and the Pandavas, could not be so with Janmejaya II. In the Anugita of Asvamedha Parva, Utamka did not get immortality or any such boon, making his existence at the time of Janmejaya II possible. It is apparent from this how part of the Bharata Samhita has been foisted upon the Mahabharata with the story of the snake. There is hardly any date to fix the time of the conflict between the Kurus and the Nagas, which loomed large in the political background of ancient India through the different phases of its cultural development. There were two Parikshits and Janmejayas in the Kuru line of kings. Nor is this all. Utamka became famous for slaying Dhundhu, son of Madhukaitava, through the king Kubalastya, son of Brihadastya. Utamka belongs to an earlier period beyond the shadow of a doubt. The annotator Nilkantha cited him and Parasara as performers of snake sacrifice, etc.\*

But the importance of the Bharata Samhita as a historical manual of a very early age should be sufficiently stressed. The kings whose deeds are celebrated in it do not belong to a particular dynasty as in the Ramayana. The Bharata and the Mahabharata describe the achievements of the more important kings, who had ruled from Vedic times over different parts of India. The Puranas, which derived their stories and themes from the Epics, were much later works and, as it is alleged, were composed at Naimisharanya, which became famous. The Mahabharata as recited by Sauti to Saunaka, who was the Chancellor of the University of Naimisharanya, was a much later

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\* Santi Parva 73 Chapter 33 verses footnote

version of the great Epic and this is conclusively proved by a palpable anachronism which occurs in it. The Bharata genealogy mentions Janmejaya I as being one of the early kings of the Lunar dynasty. Santanu found the boy on the river-side practising archery and took him to his palace. This and the story of his birth, connected with two incidents and Ganges falling in love with the father of Santanu, make the whole affair look suspicious and contradictory.

Bhisma is called one of the eight Basus who came to earth by the curse of Vasistha, to whom they did not make obeisance and they prayed to Ganges and were blessed with salvation from the curse by her good offices. The discourse between Yudhishthira and Bhisma, a substance of a dialogue between Indryota Saunaka and Janmejaya, is set forth in great detail in Santi Parva. This same king is mentioned as one of those celebrated kings of ancient India who is said to have laid down his life for the sake of Brahmins. This Janmejaya was the grandson of Yayati, and son of Puru, and cannot be the Parikshit under which name the dialogue was wrongly entered in the Mahabharata for the simple reason that Bhisma died long before Janmejaya II, the son of Parikshit II, in the line of Arjuna, was born. Besides, Janmejaya the Kuru king is mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana as a king and Brahmanical teacher of the age. Janmejaya, the Kurus and the Panchalas are mentioned in the Ramayana and the town of Hastinapura (ii, 68, 13).

Religious worship and family pride were the distinguishing feature of ancient India before the caste system came into vogue and descended to be one of the weakest of all human frailties. Every endeavour was made to secure a place in the book of religion or of philosophy, so that one's name could go down to posterity and one's glory be recited by the rhapsodists or the pouranics in the public assembly. The lists of Solar and Lunar kings in both the Epics contain the names of Nahusa and Yayati, in the latter list they occur as the ninth and tenth names, in the contemporaneous list of Solar kings, they are mentioned as the 35th and 36th in descent from the original progenitor. Jahnu, the Kuru king of North Panchala, is a contemporary of Bhagiratha, the Solar king. The name of Saudasa occurs as the 26th king of the same line. Now the list of Solar kings is somewhat confusing, for in the lists of Mithila and Ayodhya kings which were recited at the time of Rama's marriage, Janaka is placed as the 26th in descent from Nimi, whereas Dasaratha is 39th from Marichi, who was a contemporary of Nimi. For, the name of Naimisharanya owes its origin to Nimi's sacrifice.

Twelve or thirteen names of kings must be eliminated from the list of Ayodhya kings, in order to make Dasaratha and Janaka con-

temporaries, which they certainly were. These names must have been tacked on to the Ayodhya list from those of a collateral line. If this correction is made, Saudasa and Janmejaya could be shewn to have been contemporaries and this is also the opinion of Mr Pargiter, who maintains that the list of the Ramayana is incorrect by ten or eleven kings. This is what he says,

"Putting aside Dilipa, because the comparison from him is uncertain, since the Ramayana names only one Dilipa, while the Puranas mention two, and starting from Raghu about whom there is no doubt he (Kalidasa) gives four kings, Raghu, Aja, Dasaratha and Rama as in the Puranas, instead of the Ramayana version of 14 or 15 kings."

The author of the chronology of India finds that 'the Aikshaku king Dasaratha, the father of Rama the northern Pancala king Atithigra Divodasa the brother of Abalya, Senajit, the southern Pancala king Sarvabhauma and Rksha II, the sons of Viduratha of the Hastinapura line Krtu, the father of Uparicara whose descendant Brhadhratha I founded the kingdom of Magadha Romapada Dasaratha of the dynasty of Anga Sraddhwaja Janaka the father of Sita king servant of the Yadu dynasty, and the father of Vatsabha the Mahabha, all these ten kings belonged to the same age namely the age of the Divodasa

"The confusion in the lists of kings in the two Indian Epics is clear, and what is more, there is reversal in the order in the Puranas. The genealogy and chronology of the ancient kings may be of absorbing interest to students of history, but there is ample ground to believe that it is almost a hopeless task, due to one man having so many names, misreading and introduction of spurious names."

The Rig Veda mentions that Gargi, the son of Vajineya Bharadvaja, killed Varci and Samtara in the country of Udabraya, and Prastoka, the son of Srujaya, gave him presents as well as Divodasa (Rig II, 49, 22, 23, 25). The commentator, Sayana, says that Prosioka and Srujaya were the same as Atithigra Divodasa and Astatha. The Vedic, Epic, and Puranic evidences seldom coincide and show anachronisms.

In the time of Asvalayana Grihya Sutra, the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata were known as two distinct works. How the one came to be tacked on to the other is in itself a very important fact.

In the Asvalayana Sruta Sutra (II 6 10) one finds that Bhargava, Vaitshya and Svetasa were the famous Pravara of a section of the Bhrigus, viz., of the Yakshas, Badhanas, Maunas, Mankas, etc. In the Pravara patronymic forms were used. The Gotra and Pravara are important signs, not of lineage but to trace the priests and the form of worship the line of kings followed or changed. In the Vedic age anybody born in a family or Gotra could enter a different one if he liked, as Grtsamada Angrasa entered the Bhargava order. The Gotra was established by Arstisena, the son of Sala, in the Krtu age. Arstisena

\* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 121.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 47.

‡ Ibid page 21.

was a Gotra title like Kausika, Vasistha, Saunaka, Rathilara and Bhargava, and the Mahabharata mentions only four gotras. It will be seen that in the Paurava genealogy none of Devapi's ancestors had the name Arstisena, whose instance would have justified the name Arstisena for Devapi, for variant forms of the names of persons are always common in the Puranas.

The authors of Rig Vedic hymns and the circumstances under which these hymns were composed are no less important to decipher the age and time of the man named in the genealogy. The Rig Veda contains the compositions of Saunaku. The Mahabharata has two lists of Paurava kings. The one given in the 94th Chapter may be older but is not very clear. But one significant fact is that one Panchala king invaded the kingdom of Hastinapur, and the king Samvaran took refuge in the Punjab and became a follower of Vasistha and recovered the kingdom. He married the daughter of the Sun, Tapati. In India the descendants of Paurava kings as well as followers of gods Ikshaku and Bharata, took their names as Solar and Lunar dynasties.

The great fight which is mentioned in the hymns of the seventh Mandala (18, 19, 33) of the Rig Veda between Sudasa, king of the first Aryans, assisted by Tritsus, descendants of Vasistha, on the one hand, and ten kings, five of the second Aryan peoples and five of their non-Aryan allies on the other, was not amplified in the Mahabharata as the European scholars are led to believe. Since the Rig Vedic Bharatas were not the Bharatas of the Mahabharata—the descendants of Bharata, son of Dushyanta, were Lunar race Aryans—they were distinguished as Daushyanti Bharata in Satapatha Brahmana. Hence the Vedic connection which is sought to be established by means of this episode cannot stand.

Though the Mahabharata is explicitly a work which was undertaken with a view to popularise Vedic observances and practices among the people, it was done not by making the war between Sudasa and the Yadu and Turvasu the main story of the Epic in a transformed manner, but by enunciating their Vedic practices to the people at the Vedic sacrifice. Yadu was said to have been the progenitor of the Rakshasas in the forest of Crouncha (Uttarakanda Ramayana VII, Canto 69). His father Yayati called upon his sons, one after the other, to save him from the curse of his father-in-law Sukracharjya by transferring to him their youthful energy. None of his sons but Poru agreed to do so. It was a very romantic example of filial devotion and piety of the age, but it was also a sort of test for selecting a right successor to the throne in Ancient India. It will be seen that as soon as Poru agreed to do so —

the king retired to the forest to practise asceticism, placing the reins of administration in the hands of his dutiful son Poru

Valmiki, descended as he was from Sukra, combined with his relationship with Yadu, son of Devayani, the daughter of Sukra, must have uttered the verse which is said to have been the inspiration Sloka giving birth to the composition of the Ramayana Vasistha and Vyasa are said to have suffered for the loss of their sons and the Epic owes its origin to this. Father and son are all but mortal, for which the world grew so anxious and selfish, and they are the real causes of all grief and attachment in this world. The father would not have remained for all time the satisfactory predicate of the godhead. Ancestor worship was thus displaced. It must not be lost sight of that it was in the schools of the Vedic sacrifice that the Bharata Samhita had its origin and development.

Unfortunately, the real character of the Mahabharata, its scope and functions, being perhaps misunderstood by scholars, they have stressed the literary aspect of the work concerned with the war too strongly, to the exclusion of the earlier version of the Epic, which is embodied in the Bharata Samhita. Even such a learned scholar and student of Sanskrit literature as Professor Winternitz has been misled into thinking that the really relevant portions of the Bharata Samhita, such as the Pausya Parva, the Markendeya section of the Bana Parva, and the Narayana section in the Santi Parva lie outside the scope of the Epic proper. He also thinks that the Anusashana Parva, which is nothing but a "Manual of Law", became "a component part of the Mahabharata at a still later date", and that "it bears all the marks of a late fabrication". The opinion which is so dogmatically asserted is based, no doubt, upon the erroneous conception of the true character of the Bharata Samhita, which is partly a Manual of Law.

The well known Professor Sylvain Levi has been able partially to glimpse the inmost recesses of the Mahabharata when he says "that the Mahabharata is a deliberate composition organically and artistically spread around a central fact and inspired by a dominant sentiment which penetrates and permeates it, and that it can be compared with the Vinaya, the code of discipline of the Mula Sarvastivadin Buddhists". He is of opinion that the whole great Epic "with all its exaggerations and episodes, with all its varied and luxuriant mass of detail is based on nothing but a code of Kshatriya discipline as practised by the Bhagiratas."

The thesis which is here propounded is that the Mahabharata was originally intended for a wider purpose than the mere education of a certain class of men or Kshatriyas only, and that, having had its origin in one of the Vedic schools of sacrifice, it served the purpose of cultural uplift of the whole community, Aryans and non-Aryans, who congregated at these functions.

Etymologically the word Samhita means a "collection," but in its original sense it was applied to a collection of rules of conduct only with reference to the performance of sacrifices. The liturgical Samhita preceded in point of time the compilation of the Vedas as different Samhitas, which was done with a view to assist the different priests engaged in the sacrifices in the performance of their respective duties in the ceremony. The later Hindu law books took the title of Samhita, in order to acquire a special sacerdotal importance. The rules of conduct of the different castes were treated in the Dharma Sutras at an earlier period. The word for a collection of authoritative laws went by the name of Dharma Shashtra. The Bharata Samhita therefore has reference to the rules of conduct which were promulgated at the sacrifices and illustrated by means of stories, and does not mean or imply the great Kurukshetra war, which later on became the central theme of the current Epic.

It may be emphasised that the real reason for the compilation of the Bharata Samhita then was to establish peace and harmony among the different warring castes and tribes. The older Vedic sacrifices had become mechanical and soulless. The rituals which were performed were not understood, the symbol implied was hardly less so. The Atri Samhita lays down that no one who did not understand the rituals should be engaged in the performance of the sacrifices. As the purpose of these reformed sacrifices was not to create an atmosphere of mysticism, as every step in the sacrifice had a deep social and almost political significance, it was necessary that every word uttered, and everything done in connection with it, should be clearly understood.

The Bharata Samhita was a work which was partly ritualistic, partly anecdotal and partly theological; it was first connected with Vedic sacrifices, and this was lost sight of by some scholars, who have been enthralled by the intensely human interest that centred on the fight between the Kurus and the Pandavas\*. In fact, the great war of Kurukshetra has been so powerfully treated in the Mahabharata that it is quite natural that the great scholars of the Mahabharata should find in it the chief theme of the original Mahabharata and treat other matters not relating to this great story as lying outside the scope of the Epic proper. The internal evidence furnished by the Mahabharata itself would dispel any such notions. It will show the exact scope and features of the original Mahabharata so clearly, that the subject is reserved for a more detailed amplification in the next chapter.

It is sufficient for the purpose of this chapter to lay stress only on the salient points overlooked by many important scholars. The

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\*The Mbh Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLXI, verses 29-57



original theme of the Mahabharata was developed in the story-telling propaganda school of a particular sect of Vedic worshippers, who used sacrifices for a higher cultural purpose, and did not relate to war or any incidents of war, but was meant for elevating the masses as well as the intelligent classes to higher spiritual realisations, and sought to effect a cultural fusion of the various races and divisions of people living in India. The stories and legends introduced in the Bharata Samhita were for inculcating moral lessons, the rituals connected with the performance of sacrifice were explained with a view to spread among the people crude medical notions of primitive age embodied in the Atharva Veda, and a higher spiritual craving was imparted to the people through instructions on Narayana worship. The duties of the four Ashramas and the duties of various castes were also promulgated in the Bharata Samhita. War, gambling, hunting and drinking were shown to be evils which result in much unhappiness. The wide range of subjects and purpose covered by the original Bharata Samhita was such, that it could not be published among all classes of people except through the performance of sacrifices on a large scale, which they were all invited to attend. The Bharata Samhita was originally intended to be as much a manual for the priests as were the Taittreya Samhita and Catapatha Brahmana.

The Bharata Samhita, as has been shown previously, belongs to the period of the Vedic sacrifices, but its philosophy and examples are meant to indicate a new development in the ideology of the Vedic thinkers. It was composed in a period of transition and was meant to hasten the deep spiritual speculations of the Upanishads. It had not yet got free of its ritualistic entanglements, but it pointed to a higher way of attaining salvation. If the Bharata Samhita is the earliest stratum of the great Epic, it would be quite natural to infer that whatever is mentioned as having occurred in the earliest cycle belongs to the subject-matter of the Bharata Samhita.

It may be open to objection from two quarters, from those who have been bewildered by the rather contradictory nature of statements found in the Mahabharata and those who are opposed to any theory which would place such an early date to the compilation of the Bharata Samhita. Some of the important scholars are inclined to the view that there are very early matters which have crept into the Mahabharata, but they lie outside the scope of the Epic proper. There are other scholars, however, who believe in an earlier text represented by the Bharata Samhita, but they have not tried to find out what it was and how it was possible to transform it into its present size.

The profound Epic scholar Professor Hopkins also supports our conclusion in this matter. He also speaks of the "Anti-thesis between the old orthodoxy and the new science of thought, which not only disregards the Vedic ceremonies but condemns them" The issue is confused in the Mahabharata, but it is quite clearly brought out in the Bharata Samhita, and it is with the object of proving this contention in all its aspects that a close examination of what should be considered the texts of the Bharata Samhita becomes necessary.

If the implications and bearing of Poulama, Pousya and Astika Parvas are understood with the Narayana section of Shanti Parva along with the Shanti, Annusasana, Asvamedha and Bana Parvas, one would get as near as possible to the original text of the Bharata Samhita, which was later on amplified in the two Epics, *viz.*, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. For this it is necessary to realise the earlier and later aspects of thought represented by the hymns of the Rigveda. One would find a very close connection between these sections of the Mahabharata and the Rigveda proper—not only through the sages mentioned therein, but also a close chronological agreement between them and the period of the Rik verses.

The Bharata Samhita is connected with the Samkhya system of philosophy enunciated by Kapila, who may be held to have composed the original version of the Bharata at his Ashrama in Svetadwip—probably in South Bengal. In the Ramayana too one notes the individual strain belonging to an earlier period when Valmiki wrote his Epic on the bank of the Tamasa. It is necessary, therefore, to dwell more fully on the Ashrama-like which is portrayed so powerfully in the Pousya Parva, for not only is it a part and parcel of the Bharata Samhita, but it has influenced great Indian modern thinkers like the Indian Poet Laureate Tagore, and the late Swami Dayananda, to revive this system in the educational centres with which their names are so prominently connected. It is something like a revival of pre-Raphaelitism in India.

The university life, so rich in its varied complexities and so deeply interconnected with the complex modern life, was a heritage of the Vedic schools of thought in the later phase. Buddhism made full use of this system and under the patronage of kings and emperors they founded, on similar lines, their famous universities such as those of Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila, etc. No student of Indian culture should ignore the importance of university life developed from the simple personal contact of the sages with two or three disciples to that of Naimisharanya, with a great scholar like Saunaka as its

Chancellor, to its twelve years sacrifice, and congregation of a large number of teachers before whom the examination of students took place. This description is as important for tracing the progress of educational activities of the ancient Indians as those of the celebrated Chinese scholars Fa-hien and Itsing, who described the Nalanda University.

The whole of the Narayana section of the Mahabharata, the discourse in Shanti Parva between sages as preceptors and pupils on old religion and philosophy, like Chapters 330 and 250, definitions of God and Brahma in Chapter 237, and Hari Gita in 256, and also between God Indra and early kings and their priests Kasyapa, Bhṛigu, Vasistha, Agastya, etc., must have formed parts of the Bharata Samhita. Vyasa told his son Suka of the existence of old literature by the learned sages before he composed his famous Epic.

"I shall now describe to you duties having a very ancient origin and laid down by the Rishis, duties which are superior to all others."

He described worldly affairs as an ocean and human life as a river whose landing stage of truth lay on the miry bank of anger, full of reptiles of lust and ambition, eddies of speeches of falsehood and deception. Men, endowed with learning, culture and wisdom, were alone able to reach the shore. Wise men considered this to be prized above all things in human life. One could free oneself from all anxieties like a snake which cast off its slough. One could see the soul within oneself with the lamp of knowledge. Seeing oneself within, one would acquire omniscience, ceasing of course to regard one's own body as oneself. Brahma has no sex—male, female or neuter. The person, irrespective of sexes, can acquire the knowledge of Brahma. The acquisition of this knowledge is described as the true liberation of soul and the question of re-birth, heaven and hell do not arise. This is the mystery of all mysteries and the very highest knowledge one can attain for one's salvation. The human soul did not know wherefrom it came and where it would go. This is the true ideal cultural worship of Nara Narayana of the recognised national India of the great Epic age. It is said that this knowledge of the all-pervading soul should be administered to a son who controlled his senses and was honest and submissive.

The ship cannot reach its destination unless the captain knows the use of the compass or follows the direction of the stars, measures the depths of the sea and takes due precaution against dangers lying below the surface of the water. Human life without a captain is sure to founder in the sea of troubles. The captain who is in the human breast should be awakened to use the compass of love to steer life.

on a right course. This is, in short, the psychology of human success in this world below to realize what is above. Fortitude is the guard and support of all [the other virtues. By looking into physical causes men's minds are opened and enlarged. Pleasure is made instrumental to the moral purpose of one's being. There is a divine message in the green fields, river-banks, the sun-beam, and moonshine, in movements of all living animals in their different modes of life and living, in building their places of rest and in following their game of hunting for their food. Glory, honour and fame are nothing but the symptoms of the infinite and progressive nature of intellect. Matter is sublime and beautiful when it is significant of mind, i.e., where pleasure is made instrumental to the moral purpose of one's being. Even the cruel serpent, whose sting means sure death, hears music with rapt attention, circles round the light and dances to the flute. Death is the only reality in life to human beings who are engrossed in enjoyments to polish their manners and disguise their faults rather than reform the heart and set right its deformities by following the footsteps of great men or their wise instructors.

It is easy for men or women to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws, but there were no such false human beings in ancient India. Not men and women but even their gods gladly exposed their sins and crimes and took the penances or made expiations gladly. Thus it speaks for itself that the ancient Hindu laws were made, not to punish the law-breakers, but were the self-imposed punishment of expiation for trivial and technical offences which law-givers committed in their youth and which were justly sought to be overlooked by kings.

Indian history as treated in the Epics and Puranas may often err on the side of extravagance, but it would leave us in a vacuum if all the materials available in them are dismissed as fabulous. Western scholars are now realising that some historical facts may be gleaned from them. The difficulty of interpreting the mass of legends embodied in Indian historical traditions may often dismay a research scholar in this difficult task, but if Indian history is to be resuscitated from oblivion, the task should not be shirked.

The Puranas and the Epics divide the chronology of Indian history into 11 cycles of Manu; facts are systematically grouped under each of these epochs of early Indian history. Each epoch is not of fabulous duration, but perhaps consisted of some definite period marked off from the rest by certain features of culture. In the Mahabharata, historical accounts are given from the first cycle of Manu (Svayambhuva Manu) to the 7th cycle (Vaivasvat Manu). The Bharata Samhita was origi-

nally a theological dissertation on Narayana which came later on to be enlarged into the present Mahabharata, and therefore the view which the learned professor holds about the Narayana section of Shanti Parva as lying outside the scope of the Epic proper might be true if by the Epic is meant the story of the war between Kurus and Pandavas, but the same cannot be said about its relation to the Bharata Samhita, of which it formed the most cardinal and central theme.

It may be asked how, if the Narayana Section of the Shanti Parva formed the pivot of the Bharata Samhita, such legends as those mentioned in the Adi Parva, viz., the legend of Utamla, the fable of the elephant and tortoise, etc. and the Markendaya Section of the Bana Parva, come to be integral parts of the Bharata Samhita. The answer is that it was due to the very important fact that the Bharata Samhita came to be recited at the sacrifices and was adopted for popular use. It was necessary that people who were reached by means of story-telling should be interested. The Bharata Samhita served a multilateral purpose, and it is for this reason that its transformation into the present form was possible.

The Bharata Samhita enlightens one as to the laws and constitution of Ancient India, the power of the king and his priest, with the codes of the religion delegated to them, as it were, by God, Almighty Father. The rulers of a country or the propounders of religion may be said to be the servants of God. To personify the genius of the past age correctly one must have very different models. The picture could only emanate from a master's hand. Poets have often exhibited delightful specimens giving vivid impressions of individuals, there was nothing but sincerity and purity. The antidote to the polluting and enervating addiction to finery and voluptuousness will be found in the skilful discipline of the intellect and the cultivation of moral principles of the past. Little knowledge of the world will be discovered by attributing all failures to mere fate and misfortune. The doctrines of chance and of opportunity have grown apace in modern times. There is no spirit of contrition within the soul which will let one rest till one can do something to repair the evils of past conduct and effect a sort of reconciliation with one's heavenly as well as one's earthly father.

Earthly parents feed their children, not because they are moved by their cries, clothe them, not because they are naked. They know these necessities through selfless love. Parents have no thought, like other friends and preceptors, of a return for their good offices. They cast no oblique glances to their own interest or have reflex views on themselves. If by all their endeavours they can obtain their child's

welfare, there is no higher object to their ambition, no better accomplishment of their wishes. The infirmities of age sit upon them who feel not the troubles of life, but those sinless at the approach of death are blessed with the idea that they will be living and honoured in the memory and person of their children and pass down to the receptacle of all the living to reap the rich harvest of all their cares and labour in the duty, affection and felicity of their dear children.

Ancient Indo-Aryan history is full of the faithful picture of parent wor-ship which formed the religious basis of the divine worship of God Almighty, the parent of the universe. The possession of this affection is only possible when the mind is well-disciplined and well-stored. "Neither give thou Aesop's cock a gem, who would be better pleased and happier if he had a barley corn" said Lord Bacon. The ass may be dressed in a lion's skin, but it can hardly change the voice which will betray it. One must be holy before one puts on the garment of the holy wise men. Brutes fear to die out of the instinct to preserve a life of enjoyment, but men do so more on account of the day of judgment or with their thought of the next world. A pious religious man has no such fear and he dies at will in peace. This has been the ideal human death of the ancient Satya Yuga, when virtue reigned supreme.

'Man makes a death which Nature never made,  
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,  
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one' — Young

This is the essence of the Bharata Samhita and the Epic kernel of Ancient India. The faith and blessings of religion, preached in the Bharata Samhita, confer an inheritance of rest and a crown of glory. Blessed be forever that parent's children when knowledge and faith have made them all children of one God and one faith of Narayana. The Ancient Indians' National God was Narayana. All sectarian priests adored and worshipped Him as superior to all gods if not the only God. This gospel of truth is preached in the book of the Hindus called the Bharata Samhita.

In the most primitive condition of society every individual has to fight for food and drink as well as comfort, but with the growth of society the question of spiritual food became a necessary element for the growth of a nation. Kings were raised to defend the country and nation against any aggression. Laws were defined from custom in consultation with elders, and punishment began to be inflicted on transgressors. The Bharata Samhita describes the origin of spiritual instructions to Brahma, from whom self-controlled sages like Sanat-Kumar and Narada receive them while Agastya, Kapila, Bhrigu and

Vasistha acquired perfection from their devotions and actual experience of worldly life

Professor Winternitz, in the following quotation, bears out this thesis,

"Whereas, however", he says, "the Puranas maintain a certain connection with Epic poetry and are, as it were, a repertory of Indian legend poetry, the Tantras the Samhitas, the Agamas, which differ from these but slightly, rather bear the stamp of purely theological works touching the technicalities of the cult of certain sects, together with their metaphysical and mystical principles. Strictly speaking, the 'Samhitas' are the sacred books of the Vaisnavas, the 'Agamas' those of the Saivas, and 'Tantras' those of the Saktyas."

Action and thought go hand in hand, one may control the limbs, but how can one stay the mutiny of thought? Memory is not always a joy for it makes grief unbearable. For, when a poor tortured creature is writhing in agony with a maddened brain from thoughts of what has been, it seems to him a kind of fresh infliction. Prayer, religion and divine concentration are the weapons with which one can conquer all those wars of mind and body to which human frailty is subjected. Particular records of facts under different circumstances can benefit the understanding of the distressed to gain strength to overcome the difficulty.

The Bharata Samhita contained the duties of the four Ashramas (stages of life)—moral lessons and philosophical truths—which enabled the wise men to conceive the great Creator of the universe. The precepts were sometimes illustrated by fables and anecdotes from traditions to enlighten the unintelligent section of the general public. It eventually became the media through which the story of the conflict between Kurus and Pandavas was almost told. It must not be lost sight of that the sacrifice had a wide and universal appeal, for it was in the schools of the Vedic sacrifices that the Bharata Samhita originated and partook of the wide outlook that one finds in the hymn whose translation is quoted below —

"May in the Brahmin community be born Brahmins possessed of the lustre of sacred knowledge and may in this state be born Kshatriyas proficient in archery, brave and great chariot warriors. May cows be milkgiving oxen able to draw, horses swift women with graceful persons and young men fond of riding chariots, desirous of winning and fit for appearing in assembles. May this sacrificer obtain a hero son. May rain come at each time we wish for it may planets give us good crops and may there be subsistence and welfare for all of us."

The spirit of monotheism in the Narayana cult spread like wild fire and ruled every kind of Vedic god out of order. So great was its influence over all classes of men that even the foreign invaders of India could not escape it. Its ultimate phase of divine universal love in Sri Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, etc., was reflected in all the religions of the world.

One should clearly understand that Yajna had an earlier as well as a later phase in order to appreciate the important role which the Bharata Samhita occupied in the transition from one to the other. In fact, the change was brought about by the compilation of the Bharata Samhita. Instances can be multiplied of the performance of the Yajnas, which the kings and priests celebrated, by which they gained or tried to gain an immediate material reward. Then enemies tried their best to thwart them. It led to many sanguinary contests. The celebrated King Jarasandha of Magadha was about to complete his Naramedha Yajna, in which he was going to slaughter the chiefs whom he had brought in chains from various parts of India, and whose blood he was going to offer to the Great God Rudra-Devi, when Sri Krishna came secretly with Bhima and Arjuna into the enclosure of the sacrifice. Bhima killed Jarasandha under the instructions of Sri Krishna and released the imprisoned kings, who were then invited to attend the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhishthira at which, however, the King Sisupala of Chedis was killed by Sri Krishna. Kamsa was slain at a sacrifice by Sri Krishna when he was invited. It was with the object of destroying the Nagas, that King Janmejaya initiated the snake or Naga sacrifice at the instance of Bhargava, but this was set at rest by the sage named Astika.

The Astika Parva, which directly bears upon the snake sacrifice undertaken by Janmejaya II, contains stories which are of great value. It helps one to find out the exact character of the earlier Samhita to which the Mahabharata owes its origin. Legends which are told in this connection show the interesting nature of the instruction conveyed to the people and bears a family likeness to similar stories found in Aesop's Fables. The famous sage Bibha Vasu could not agree to the proposal of his younger brother, Supratika, for dividing their ancestral property and cursed him to become a elephant. The younger brother, not to be outdone by the elder, also cursed his elder brother, so that he might assume the shape of a tortoise. Thus the two brothers, reborn in the forms of an elephant and a tortoise, dwelt in a tank. They could not forget their old grudge and started a great fight between themselves which caused a great noise and disturbance in the water of the tank. Garuda, the son of Kasyapa by Binata, was very hungry. He saw the two huge animals fighting with each other, seized them in his claws and flew with them to the Gandhamadana Mountains, where he made a hearty meal off them. It will be admitted that this fable contains a great moral, and, as such, it was recited at the sacrifice, and became incorporated in the Bharata Samhita.

The quarrels between Kadru and Binata, Devayani and Sarmistha, were those between co-wives, and were probably ancient historical



anecdotes. These stories illustrate on the one hand the social usages prevalent among the early Aryans, and on the other hand establish the connection of the Bhārata Samhitā with prominent problems of the Rig Veda, in which hymns are found on the way by which co-wives were humbled in ancient times\*. It cannot be overlooked that these allegorical stories also show that the reciters of them<sup>†</sup> bear the stamp of a cult of certain sects, meant to travel into the historical domain but confined to certain sects, imparting education through fables. The story of Kādī<sup>†</sup> the Śūdras, which occurs in the same Parva, has a still more important historical significance. This, as will be shown later on, has an important bearing on the particular Vedic school in which the Bhārata Samhitā originated. But these along with the chapters on royal duties and the four stages of life, the duties of different divisions of society described in the Śrīnti Parva as well as in the Annusaranta Parva and elsewhere, constituted the original Bharata Samhitā in which Mahaparusha and Narayana occur as the prime objects of worship.

From what has been said above, it is obvious that the original Mahabharata having had its origin in the sacrificial celebrations of the ancient Indians, became in course of time an account of the war between the Kurus and Pandavas. The original Bharata Samhitā had nothing to do with this theme. On the contrary, it condemned violence and advocated non-violence†. Hence almost a new God unconnected with war, diplomacy and the intrigues of such Vedic gods as Indra, Varuna and Agni then comes into prominence and eclipses the others. Nārāyaṇa, said to be Vishnu, a minor Vedic God, now becomes the chief deity of the land. The Bharata Samhitā did not recite the glories of the Solar or the Lunar dynasties of kings, who were not then so split up into conflicting and distinct lines. The Rāmāyaṇa described the Solar dynasty of kings and specially Rāma, and the Mahabharata the Lunar dynasty of kings. But one significant fact one cannot overlook is that the ancient Hindu rites and ceremonies were performed, and continue to be the same even now, according to the (tithi) dates of the Lunar month because, on the corresponding dates of the Lunar month, (i.e., on the same tithis) the constellations, the sun, the moon, the stars, etc., return to approximately the same relative positions as on the corresponding dates of the Solar month.

Time is an estate of God on which human life grows. The ancient monasteries of India proved to the world that the miracles of wisdom were far more beautiful and enjoyable than the fleeting pleasures of the

\* Rig Veda 10th Mandala

† Śrīmadbhagbat Kanda 12, Chapter VI

senses in a country where bounteous Nature offers every opportunity for their full gratification. The sages who made an imaginary cycle of time called Manvantara, were represented as stars who performed the task of self-differentiating unity. The bird Garuda was regarded as the most powerful being, bearing as it does Narayana, the Supreme Being or the Paramatma, on its wings and fighting with Indra for the nectar. This was the prologue to the Bharata Samhita. This legend occurs in Rig 10. 114, 105 and establishes its intimate connection with the latter.

The ideal supermen of Ancient India were called Devas and their Sanskrit language and characters received the distinct epithets of Deva-bhasa and Devanagari, respectively. The hymns of the Vedas refer to the manifestations of Nature, which can hardly coincide with similar things in any country other than India. There is no mention of any peculiar phenomenon like the Aurora Borealis, to suggest for a moment that the Aryans' settlement was at or near the Polar regions, where that phenomenon takes place. The early Aryans were not barbarian beasts to fly or lie stupefied and dumb with fear before fire or the other terrific scourges of Nature, but they prayed to be saved from them. They enlivened them with the instinctive urge to find in them the spirit of God, and invoked them with prayers, offerings and libations to propitiate Him, who alone could make them immune from the cruel operations to which no cause could be ascribed. It was thus that Varuna, the presiding deity of the Ocean, became the supreme God. There is no parallel to such a conception of God as the Vedas give in Western or in any mythology or pantheon of the world.

"There is the Varunassaman (Gram VII, I 18, composed on SV I 255, chanted on SV II 429-430. There are three samans of this name, see SV ed Calcutta, Vol 1, page 447, the last of the three is Svaram) (23) "

"By means of this (saman) Varuna attained the reign, the supremacy. He who, in lauding, has applied the Varunassaman, attains the reign, the supremacy (How Varuna obtained the supremacy is set forth in the Jaim Br (III 152) "King Varuna was (originally) the equal of the other deities. He desired, 'May I be consecrated as king over all the Gods'. He dwelled a hundred years with Prajapati as his pupil. He (Prajapati) imparted this chant to him (saying) 'Accept this royalty, this characteristic of mine, the Gods will make thee their king'. He (Varuna) went to the Gods. The Gods seeing him approaching, got up in honour of him. He said to them: 'Do not yet get up in honour of me, ye are forsooth, my brothers I am your equal'. 'No' they said, 'we see on thee the characteristic of our father Prajapati', and they got up in honour of him. They put down for him the king's-seat, and, whilst he was seated on it, the Vasus consecrated him to royalty, the Rudras consecrated him to kingship, the Adityas consecrated him to supremacy, the All-gods consecrated him to sovereignty, the Maruts consecrated him to all-mightiness, the Sadhyas and Aptyas consecrated him to overlordship." See the text in das Jaim-br in Auswahl, No 188) (23)."

"(The verses beginning) 'Chant ye unto Mitra', being addressed to Heaven and Earth, (serve for) the Aja(-laud) addressed to Mitra and Varuna. Heaven and

Parta, forsooth are the favourite resort of Mitra and Varuna, by means of their favourite resort he thus appropriates them cryptically (1) ' ' One (of these verses, beginning ) 'Thee O Agni, Varuna and Mitra', is addressed to Varuna That part of the sacrifice, which is badly performed, is solzed by Varuna, thus he thereby disposes by his sacrifice (1) ' ' (The tristich beginning ) 'Mitra, of holy might, I call for' is the rithantara like (ajra laud) addressed to Mitra and Varuna, (5) ' 'The deities (formerly) did not yield the sovereignty to Varuna He saw this 'Gode stand', and, thereupon, the deities yielded to him the supremacy His (the Sacrificer's) equals yield him the superiority (30) ' ' He who knows this to his share falls the lustre of might (and) he gets a firm standing ( 1) ' "Lustrous (bhrga) becomes he, who in lauding has applied the Bharga (saman), glorious (vasha) he, (who in lauding has applied) the Vashas (saman) (32) ' 'There is the Vasishta (saman), its brahmana is the same (33) ' "There is the Arka of Dirgha tman, Arka is food for obtaining fool (34) '"

This refers to the exact implication of Arka leaf eating which made Upamanyu blind He fell into a well, but got back his eye-sight after he recited the Asvini Kumar hymn on the advice of his preceptor Asvini Kumars restored the Vedic sage Upamanyu his sight as a reward for his great reverence to his preceptor The sage Chyavana got his youth from Asvini Kumar-' boon and secured oblation for them in the sacrifice, fighting with Indra for it in a sacrifice of Chyavan's father-in-law Asvini Kumars were masters of medicine and removers of difficulties The Devas and Sages requisitioned their services They were friends in need and friends in deed

The origin of Pitriyajna or ancestor worship also pre-supposes an economic advance of the community among which it is introduced From the Vedic hymns it seems that it was connected with a knowledge of the dairy, which the Aryans learned from Panis, frequently mentioned in the Vedas Butter and cheese, which were made out of milk, became at an early time the favourite food of the Aryans, and cows were regarded by them as the chief source of wealth For this reason one comes across hymns on water, river and butter in the Rig-Veda The idea underlying these being offered at the sacrifices is that the people thought that merit could be acquired by sharing them with the gods and ancestors, so that their children might enjoy them in future uninterruptedly In the hymn of praise to the departed ancestors, Yama, who is the incarnation of Dharma (religion and rectitude) to whom they go is invoked, and the sages who are present at the sacrifices and who have come to the function to console the grief-stricken children of the deceased partake of the offerings

The Pitriyajna, or the worship of the ancestor, may be traced to a very early period in Aryan history and hymns in the Rig Veda in connection with funeral rites must necessarily be of much earlier origin

The hymn quoted below is of great importance, for it enables us to establish connection between the Pitriyajna and a few well-known Vedic sages who are associated with important branches of Vedic literature. The hymn runs thus :—

“O Yama come and accept a seat at the Yajna, bring with thee the Fathers known as Angira. Our father, the Angiras, Bhriḡu and Atharva have come, they are entitled to drink Soma, for they wish well of us at the sacrifice, and their favours invest us with prosperity.”

Thus it is quite clear that the great sages mentioned above are very intimately associated with ancestor worship. But this Vedic hymn would tend to mystify people who were assembled at the sacrifice as to its real meaning. The Bharata Samhita, as has already been repeatedly said, is connected with the story telling which took place at the Asvamedha sacrifice and the story told on the second day of the sacrifice by the priest under the heading of Yama Vivasvan certainly refers to the story which appears in the form of an allegory in which Kama (Passion), Krodha (Anger), Kāla (Time), Dharma (Piety) and Mrityu (Death) are made to appear and test the king who was willing to give and the Brahmin who refused to accept the gift at the hand of the king. The moral of this story is given below in the translation of the text bearing on the subject.

‘The king said —I am a kshatriya. I do not know how to say the word ‘give’ the only thing, O best of twice born ones that we can say is, ‘Give (us) battle.’

‘The Brahmana said —You are content with the observance of the duties of your order. Likewise, I am content with the duties of mine, O king. There is, therefore, little difference between us. Do what you please.

‘The king said —You gave vent to these words first, viz —‘I shall give you according to my might. —I, therefore, pray, O twice born one, ‘Give me the fruits of this, your recitation.

‘The Brahmana said —You boasted that your words always pray for battle. Why then do you not pray for a battle with me?

‘The king said —It is said that Brahmanas are armed with the thunder of speech, and that kshatriyas have might of arms. Hence, O learned Brahmana, this wordy warfare has taken place between you and me.

‘The Brahmana said —As regards myself, this is my resolution to-day. What shall I give you according to my might? Tell me, O king of kings, and I shall give you. Do not delay.

‘The king said —If, indeed, you wish to give me anything, then give me the fruits you have acquired by practising recitation for these thousand years.

‘The Brahmana said —Take the greatest fruit of the recitations I have practised, indeed take half, without any hesitation the entire fruits of all recitation. Or, O king, if you desire, take without any hesitation the entire fruits of my recitations.

‘The king said —Blessed be you, I have no necessity for the fruits of your recitations which I have begged. Blessings on your head. I am about to leave you. Tell me, however, what those fruits are.

"The Brahmana said —I have no knowledge of the fruits I have acquired. I have, however, given you those fruits that I have acquired by recitation. These, viz., Dharma and Time and Yama, and Vristyu, are witnesses.

"The king said —What will the fruits, which are not known, of these your observances do for me? If you do not tell me what are the fruits of your recitations, let those fruits be yours, for, forsooth, I do not wish for them.

"The Brahmana said —I will not accept any other word (from you). I have given you the fruits of my recitations. Let, O royal sage, both your words and mine prove true. As regards my recitations, I never entertained any particular desire to do. How then, O foremost of kings, should I have any knowledge of what are the fruits of those recitations? You said, Give! I said, 'I give.' I shall not falsify these words. Keep the truth. Be calm. If you refuse to keep my word, O king, great sin of untruth will visit you. O chastiser of foes, you should not utter what is untrue. Likewise, I dare not falsify what I have said. I have before this unhesitatingly said, 'I give!' If, therefore, you are firm in truth, accept my gift. Coming here, O king, you begged of me the fruits of my recitations. Therefore take what I have given away, if, indeed, you are truthful. He who is given to falsehood has neither this world nor the next. Such a person cannot rescue his departed manes. How again shall he succeed in doing good to progeny? The rewards of sacrifices and gifts, as also of fasts and religious observances, are not so powerful in rescuing as truth, O foremost of men, in both this and the next world. All the penances that have been practised by you and all those that you will practise in the future for hundreds and thousands of years are not more efficacious than truth. Truth is the one undecaying Brahma. Truth is the one undecaying Penance. Truth is the one undecaying Sacrifice. Truth is the one undecaying Veda. Truth is awake in the Vedas. The fruits attached to truth have been described as the highest. From truth originate Righteousness and Self control. Everything depends on truth.

"Truth is the Vedas and their branches. Truth is knowledge. Truth is the Ordinance. Truth is the observance of vows and fasts. Truth is the Prime Syllable Om. Truth is the origin of creatures. Truth is their progeny. It is by truth that the Wind moves. It is by truth that the Sun gives heat. It is by truth that Fire burns. It is on truth that Heaven rests. Truth is Sacrifice, Penance, Vedas, the verses of Samans, Mantras, and Saraswati. We have heard that once on a time truth and all religious observances were weighed in a scale. When both were weighed, that scale on which truth was, proved heavier. There is truth where Righteousness is. Everything multiplies through truth. Why, O king, do you wish to do false act? Be firm in truth. Do not act falsely, O king. Why do you falsify the words 'Give (me) which you have said'? If you refuse, O king, to accept the fruits that I have given you of my recitations, you shall then have to wander over the world fallen away from Righteousness. That person who does not give after having promised, and he also that does not accept after having begged, are both stained with falsehood. You should not, therefore, falsify your own words.

"The King said —To fight and to protect, form the duties of Kshatriyas. It is said that Kshatriyas are givers. How then shall I take anything from you?

"The Brahmana said —I never pressed you, O king. I did not seek your house. Yourself, coming here, you yourself begged of me. Why then do you not take?

"Dharma said —Know you both that I am Dharma himself. Let there be no dispute between you. Let the Brahmana possess the reward of gift, and let the king also obtain the merit of truth.

"Heaven said —Know, O great king, that I am Heaven's self-incarnate, come here in person. Let this dispute between you cease. You are both equal in respect of the merit or rewards that you have acquired.

"The King said.—I have no use with Heaven Go, O Heaven, to the place you have come from. If this learned Brahmana wishes to go to you, let him take the rewards that I have acquired

"The Brahmana said —In my boyhood I had, through ignorance, stretched my hand for accepting gifts Now, however, I recite the Gayatri, observing the duty of abstention Why do you, O king, tempt me thus, me who have for a long time followed the duty of abstention? I shall myself do what my duty is I do not wish to participate in the rewards acquired by you, O king I am given to penances and to the study of the Vedas, and I have abstained from acceptance

"The King said —If, O Brahmana, you are really prepared to give me the excellent reward of your recitation, then let half that reward be mine, you also take at the same time half the reward that I myself have gained by my acts Brahmanas follow the duty of acceptance Persons born in the royal order follow the duty of giving If you are not unaware of the duties, let our fruits be equal Or, if you do not wish to be my equal regarding our rewards, take then the whole of the rewards that I may have gained Do take merit I have gained if you wish to show me favour

"Bhisma continued —'At this time two very ugly persons came there Each had his arm upon the other's shoulder, both were ill-dressed They said these words —(You owe me nothing) I really owe you!—If we dispute in this way, here is the king, who governs men

I say truly, you owe me nothing You speak falsely

'I owe you a debt' Both of them, greatly exercised in dispute, then addressed the king, saying,—'See, O king, that none of us may be visited by sin!'

"Virupa said —I owe my companion Vikrita, O king, the merits of the gift of a cow I am willing to satisfy that debt This Vikrita, however, refuses to accept repayment

"Vikrita said —This Virupa, O king, owes me nothing He speaks an untruth under the appearance of truth, O king

"The King said —Tell me, O Virupa, what is that which you owe your friend here I wish to first hear you and then do what is proper

"Virupa said —Hear attentively, O king, all the circumstances fully about how I owe my companion, viz., this Vikrita, O king This Vikrita had, in days gone by, for the sake of acquiring merit, O sinless one, given away an auspicious cow, O royal sage, to a Brahmana given to penances and the study of the Vedas Going to him, O king, I begged of him the reward of that act With a pure heart, Vikrita made a gift to me of that reward I then, for my purification, did some good acts I also bought two Kapila cows with calves, both of which used to give large quantities of milk. I then presented, according to due rites and with proper devotion, those two cows to a poor Brahmana living by picking solitary grains Having formerly accepted the gift from my companion, I wish, O Lord, even here, to give him in return twice the reward. The circumstances being such O foremost of men, who amongst us two shall be innocent and who guilty? Disputing with each other about this, we have both come to you, O king Whether you judge rightly or wrongly, settle our dispute and put us in peace If this my companion does not wish to take from me in return a gift equal to what he gave me, you shall have to judge patiently and put us both on the right road

"The King said —Why do you not accept payment that is sought to be made for the debt that he owes to you? Do not delay, but accept payment of what you know, to be your due!

"Vikrita said —This one says that he owes me. I tell him that what I gave I gave away. He does not, therefore, owe me anything. Let him go, wherever he likes.

"The king said —He is ready to give you. You are, however, reluctant to take. It does not appear proper to me! I think you should be punished for this. There is little doubt in this.

"Vikrita said —I made a gift to him, O royal sage! How can I take it back? If I am guilty in this, do you declare the punishment, O Powerful one.

"Virupa said —If you refuse to take what I am ready to give, this king will, forsooth, punish you, for he is an upholder of justice.

"Vikrita said, —Begged by him I gave him what was my own. How shall I now take it back? You may go away. I permit you.

"The Brahmana said —You have heard, O king, the words of the other two. Do you take unhesitatingly what I have promised to give you.

"The King said —This subject is, indeed, as deep as an unfathomable pit. How will the tenaciousness of this heater end? If I do not take what has been given by this Brahmana, how shall I avoid being polluted with a great sin?

"The royal sage then said to the two disputants —Having acquired your respective objects, go you both. I should see that kindly duties which are in me, may not become useless. It is settled that kings should follow the duties sanctioned for them. To my misfortune, however, the course of duties laid down for Brahmanas has affected my wretched self.

"The Brahmana said —Accept, O king, I owe you. You begged it of me, and I also have promised. If, however, you refuse to take, O king, I shall forsooth curse you.

"The King said —He on royal duties, the fixed action of which is ever such! I should, however, take what you give only for making the two sorts of duty exactly equal. This my hand, that was never before extended, is now stretched forth. Give me what you owe me.

"The Brahmana said —If I have acquired any fruits by reciting the Gayatri, accept them all.

"The King said —These drops of water, see, O foremost of Brahmanas, have fallen upon my hand. I also wish to give you. Accept my gift. Let us both stand equal.

"Virupa said —Know, O king, that we two are Desire and Anger. We have induced you to act thus! You have made a gift in return to the Brahmana. Let there be equality between you and this twice born one regarding blessed regions in the next world. This Vikrita really does not owe me anything. We appealed to you for your own sake. Time, Dharma, Mrityn, and we two, have examined everything about you, here in your very presence, by creating this quarrel between you and that Brahmana. Go now as you like, to those regions of happiness which you have acquired by means of your deeds.

"Bhishma said —I have now told you how reciters win the fruits of their Recitation and what, indeed, is their object, what the place and what the regions, that a Reciter may acquire. A Reciter of Gayatri goes to the Supreme God Brahman, or to Agni or enters the region of Surya. If he plays there in his new form, then stupefied by such attachment, he is affected by the attributes of those particular regions. He is equally affected if he goes to Soma, or Vayu or Earth or Space. The fact is, he lives in all these, with attachment, and shows the attributes peculiar to those regions. If, however, after having freed himself from attachments, he goes to those regions and does not trust the happiness he enjoys and wishes for that which is

Supreme and Immutable, he then enters even that. In that case he acquires the ambrosia of ambrosia, to a state free from desire and individual consciousness. He becomes Brahma's self, freed from the influence of the pairs of opposites, happy, tranquil, and without pain. Indeed, he acquires that state which is free from pain, which is tranquil which is called Brahma, whence there is no return, and which is called the One and Immutable. He becomes free from the four means of perception viz., Direct knowledge (through the senses), Revelation, Inference, and Intuition, the six conditions (Hunger, Thirst, Grief, Delusion, Disease, and Death), and also the other six and ten attributes viz., five breaths, the ten senses and the mind. Transcending the Creator (Brahman), he becomes at one with the One Supreme Soul. Or if moved by attachments, he does not wish for such absorption, but wishes to have a separate existence depending on that Supreme Cause of everything then he gets the fruition of all his desires. Or, if he hates all regions of happiness, which have been called hells, he then driving off desire and freed from everything, enjoys supreme happiness even in those very regions. Thus, O King, I have described to you about the end acquired by Rishis. I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear from me? \*

The Bharata Samhita has a two-fold interest. Having its origin in the sacrificial school of the priests, it served the purpose of a popular manual for the priests; and secondly, it was a compendium of two great Epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which occupy such an important and almost all-embracing part in Indian literature. In its sacrificial aspects it is connected with the Panchaya Yajna of the twice born, and the public sacrifices performed by the kings at the instance of the priests. In this respect, the story of the Mahabharata, which was foisted on the Bharata Samhita, has a more direct sacrificial connection, whereas the story of the Ramayana is closely connected with exorcism and magic, which belong to the Atharva Veda proper. The Bharata Samhita is connected with Vedic lore and with the Vedic sages, and the names of such Vedic sages as composed Vedic hymns must be given precedence in the compilation of the Bharata Samhita over those who are prominently mentioned in connection with the narration of the Mahabharata, such as Saunaka and Sauti. Saunaka and Sauti belong to an altogether later period in the evolution of Vedic culture and education. The cultural and educational phases represented in the Bharata Samhita are admitted by Western scholars like Lassen, Hopkins, Oldenburgh, etc., to belong to an earlier period. The Vedic sacrifices, then, were truly the great connecting link between the ruler and the ruled, between the king and the Brahmans on the one hand and the celebrated sages, the teachers of the whole community and whose reputation had travelled beyond the confines of their own countries, on the other. They were marked by a huge concourse of men from all the important communities of the land who became unified in culture by means of these sacrifices. The pale of Aryan

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\* The Mahb. Shanti Parva Chapter CCXIX verses 41-127



culture was widened by these sacrifices, for people not belonging ethnically to the Aryan stock received the benefit of Aryan education. They were instructed in the rules of the right conduct of life appropriate to their respective professions. Hence the performance of a sacrifice, which entailed a very heavy expenditure on the kings, was regarded as an essential sign of a successful and prosperous reign, and a triumphant achievement of Aryan culture.

In the introductory portions of the Mahabharata a short outline of the contents of the Epic are given. The main purpose for which the Epic was composed, evidently by interpolation, was the celebration of the Great War, but in the summary given in the 1st Chapter of Anukramanika, a brief outline of the contents of the Bharata Samhita is given and in this no mention is made of the internecine strife between the Kurus and the Pandavas. It was said to be a sort of Upanishad converted into a Purana, (which does not mean history) composed by Veda Vyasa to console grief-stricken King Dhritarashtra. The contents of the Bharata Samhita are outlined in this connection. This portion is so important that it is quoted below with a view to ascertain the real nature of the work which is so very often misunderstood and misinterpreted.

"In this Bharata sinless and immaculate Devas, Devarshis, and Brahmanas have been described as well as Yakshas and Great Nagas.

"In it also has the possessor of six attributes, the eternal Vasudeva, been described. He is true and just, pure and holy.

"In it is described the eternal Brahma, the great true light whose great and divine deeds the wise and the learned men declare.

"From whom has been produced the non-existent and existent, and non-existent universe with the principle of reproduction and progression, birth and death and rebirth.

"In it has also been described He who is Adhyatma, and who partakes the attributes of the five elements and He to whom unmanifested and other such words can not be applied.

"And also He whom the Yogis possessed of meditation and Tapa behold in their hearts as the reflection of an image in a mirror. The man of faith ever devoted, ever employed in the exercise of virtue, is freed from sin on reading this chapter of the Bharata, etc."

Now this quotation from the current Mahabharata leaves no room to doubt what was its true kernel. The main theme having had its origin in the story-telling at the time of sacrifice, swerved in the direction of a theological treatise of a popular nature. It originated in the Vedic schools of sacrifice and contained an exposition of the doctrines and practices of the Vedas, and in its theological side it had a great connection with the protestant school of the Kshatriyas, in

which discussions took place about Atman and Paramatman, and which challenged the materialism of the Brahmins as leading nowhere

"The relationship of the Matsya Purana to the great Epic and its supplementary book, as sources", Professor Macdonell says, "is similarly intimate. (p 300)"

The same Purana contains in the 13th Adhyaya (Chapter) a very valuable piece of information, which is that the famous Rama, the invincible slayer of Ravana, and his brothers were the worshippers of Narayana, and Valmiki, a descendant of Bhrigu, is the author of the Ramayana. The careful Western students of the Epics hold the view that the Uttarakanda cannot originally have formed part of the Ramayana. This seems to be reasonable. The story of the renowned ancestor of Jamadagni (Parashu Rama) is given in the Paulama Parva and elsewhere in the Mahabharata; but the legend may be considered an enlargement on a new basis of the simple theme of the Bharata Samhita. It should be noticed in this connection that the story of Paulama, as one has it in this version, is not the same as it occurs in the Uttarakanda, and from the conflicting nature of the legends that are grouped round Bhrigu, the ancestor of the matricide and Kshatriya slayer, the different transformations through which this legend passed are evident.

The genesis of the ancient Epic may be remembered to have originated from causes of difference between Devas and Asuras for the possession of wealth, property, beautiful women or ambrosia. This is the Bharata Samhita, the first original source of the two Epics of India, where the fights between Devas and Asuras, monarchs and kings, and priests and disciples were described. In Epic India gods fell and men rose, Asuras befriended the martial kings by marriage alliances. Indra, after killing Britta, was guilty of the crime of infidelity and could not occupy the throne of heaven, but King Nahusa occupied it through his merit, his good rule and virtuous conduct. He in turn fell from heaven when he became a slave to passions through enjoyment, then Indra again occupied his seat by good conduct and expiation. Good conduct and piety transform a man into a god and even the God of gods, if He transgressed, was not exempt from punishment. This is the lesson of life which the Bharata Samhita sought to teach. Yayati, the son of Nahusa, when in heaven, thought much of him, was condemned and was rescued by the good company of his own descendants whom he met at the time of his fall.

The sacrificial rites of the Vedas practised by the Asuras and demons like Britta and Ravana for individual benefit was soon found to be disastrous as giving power to ambitious men for their own self-gratification. The sages like Agastya, Bhrigu and Kapila first used the

spiritual powers to destroy or curb them and those accounts found a place in the *Bharata Samhita*. The *Uttarakanda* *Ramayana* mentions Ravana's victory over Kubera and fall before Kṛpā, and those portions of the *Mahabharata* which describe the fall of Nahusa, Kalkeya and Batapī through Agastya and Bhṛigu, belong to the *Bharata Samhita*. In the *Bharata* the divinity is concentrated in one Narayana. This spiritual history of evolution and concentration, called Aikāntic religion, was first traced in the *Bharata Samhita*. The Epic poem is of all poetical works the most difficult. The modern critics find the Western Epics fall short of their standard. The Western definition of the Epic is very important.

'Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information' says — 'Epic poetry (epik Gr., Epos, a discourse or narrative), is a kind of poetry which has outward objects for its subjects, and is thus distinguished from lyric poetry, which deals with the inner feelings and emotions of the mind. The distinction is general, for there are few productions to which it can strictly apply, but they belong to the one class or the other, according to the predominating character. The earliest specimens of this form of art probably consisted of simple tales rhythmically arranged and recited to a very simple musical accompaniment. The longer and more artistic Epic poems, however, embrace an extensive series of events and the actions of numerous personages. The Epic poetry of the early Greeks naturally divides itself into two classes—the heroic or romantic epos of Homer and the ætæatic epos of Hesiod, the one dealing with the political, the other with the religious life of the Greeks. The 'Illiad' and 'Odyssey' of Homer present us with the finest specimens of this class of poetry that have ever appeared. The sacred poetry of Hesiod partakes very much of a lyrical character. The 'Æneid' of Virgil is not equal to the 'Illiad' of Homer as an Epic, its superiority depending more on beauty of language and arrangement than on anything in the story. The greatest Epic of modern times is the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton. Dante's 'Divine Comedy', however sublime in style, is destitute of that unity of event or action necessary to constitute a great work of this class. The 'Jerusalem Delivered' of Tasso is regularly and strictly an Epic, and adorned with all the beauties that belong to this species of composition. The Epic poem is of all poetical works the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult in execution, and hence it is that so very few have succeeded in the attempt to produce a really great Epic.' (Pages 792-3)

The authorship of Vyasa and Valmiki of the Indian Epics suffered in the different editions at the hands of editors, compilers and rhapsodists from age to age, till the plots and characters descended almost to dramatic fiction. The idea that good deeds which go unrewarded here will be recognised in the next world with better life and prosperity received enormous development. The terrors of the lower world, the fire of hell and the tortures of the inferna are depicted in the last act of the *Mahabharata*, being meant to scare evil-doers. The beloved wife Draupadi, for whom the great fight took place, fell and died, but the ideal Yudhishthira did not look at her or utter a word of sorrow for her; this is the lesson of life the great Epic teaches—what is divine or god-

like in man. Mortal man ripens like a corn and springs up again like a corn. A man, free from the stings of desires and grief, sees the majesty of the soul inside the heart and exults at meeting with that in the universe where mother, father, wife and all unite in their deaths. Yudhishthira went to heaven in person as victor of the spiritual war in the life below, a favour which Arjuna, the real victor of the Great War of Kurukshetra, could not secure for himself though called Nara Narayana, Krishna being called Narayana the principal adviser and director of the Great War. Even the hero of the Ramayana could not ascend to heaven in person.

Mythology represents the mental background of the people of the later Rig Vedic age. Men used to attach much importance to and place great faith in re-birth. The battle of ten kings in which Sudasa Parjavana met his doom for his haughtiness (Manu VII 41) is mentioned in the Rig Veda where it is said that Sudasa Parjavana fought the Bharata. There is also mention of the fights with Sambarana and with the Panchala king. In the first he was defeated and fled, and in the second, with the help of Vasistha, he recovered his kingdom. Vasistha is the priest of the Solar dynasty of kings and Visvamitra that of the Videhas, and they were more or less concerned with all the incidents of these Epics. Vasistha was connected with the victory of Sambarana and perhaps with his matrimonial alliance with the Ikshaku family and with his giving battle to the Sudas king and with the ten kings successfully. The most famous Rajarsi Arkadanta was the Somaka Sahadevya of the Mahabharata. He became so famous by performing sacrifices that the general public thought that the great ancestor of the Kaurova and Panchals was re-born in Somaka, who was invested with the title of Arkadanta. His lineal descendants were lost. Nila of Puranas and Nipa of Harivamsa are said to have descended from him. Likewise Devapi's line is not known. From the distinguished line of Arkadanta, Draupadi, the great heroine of the mythological and dramatic Mahabharata, and Dristadyumna descended.

The mythology of India is a very difficult subject—it is neither the false glory of heroic poetry nor the inflated pride of ancient philosophy. It is an attempt to develop and explain abstract ideas of religion, philosophy and love by putting them into the garb of concrete examples of humanity in the progress of time and advancement. It has been the product of the highly developed and concentrated Indo-Aryan mind of the growing ages of the past. True felicity is not to be derived from external possessions but from real wisdom, which consists in the proper exercise of knowledge and virtue. Humility is the attribute of great

and noble minds and presumption is the associate of ignorance. Books cannot teach anybody anything unless one makes an independent observation and endeavours to find the hidden truth behind the simple account. To create this curiosity in men, mythology grew up. The learned and the wise always record their experience from the results of their observations in the accounts of the glorious past. That one must penetrate beyond the surface of things into the hidden treasures is the aim of Hindu mythology.

In ordinary history man is remembered by his birth and deeds, but in religious history it is not so. In it a man finds a place if he has brought to light the life of the soul and what is infinite in man and in all the universe, and its immortality gives cultural re-birth as an integral part of religious history. The ancient Hindus called themselves *Dvija* or *Aryan*, and those who were not blessed with the religious birth were *Dasas* or non-Aryans. It was not a question of colour or creed or anything else. It must be said that the great Epic is not the history of the Kuru-Panchal or Pandava fight as Western scholars and Eastern students take it, but it was, in fact, the spiritual fight of the souls of men who were called blind, inert, fragile, against the perfect, loving, dutiful, heroic and beautiful. Yudhishthira reflected the perfect soul, Sri Krishna the loving-soul of the Universe, Arjuna the dutiful, Bhishma the heroic and Draupadi the beautiful soul against the blind soul of Dhritarashtra, inert soul of Duryodhana and fragile soul of Karna. The hero of the Mahabharata is neither Sri Krishna, nor Arjuna, nor Bhishma, but Yudhishthira, the incarnation of virtue and truth. This is the theme of the great Epic of India.

The little vanity, like a sunspot, that there must be in a perfect man like Yudhishthira, is condemned by Sri Krishna in clear terms after the war which was his sight of hell—what the poet author represented in the Mahaprasthan Parva. The real incidents in the history of the war, both spiritual and actual, are told by Krishna in the Asvamedha Parva. Sri Krishna's words to Yudhishthira should be written in letters of gold —

“All crookedness of heart brings on destruction, and all rectitude leads to Brahma. This and this only is the aim and object of all true wisdom, what can mental distraction do (to him). Your Karma has not yet been destroyed nor have your enemies been subjugated, for you do not yet know the enemies that live within your own body.”

Sri Krishna recites what is better than his lesson in the Gita to Arjuna in the war of Indra-Brita. The annotator Nilkantha speaks very highly of the spiritual lesson of the Asvamedha Parva, where Sri

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\* The Mahabharata, Chapter XI, Asvamedha Parva, page 13, Slokas 4 and 5, (M. N. Dutt's English Translation),

Krishna gave the true history of the Great War, as witnessed by him, to his father. It is worth mentioning here those portions of the description which will belie the versions of the rhapsodists.—

“The battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas went on for ten days. It was so dreadful as to make one’s hair stand erect. Bhishma of Kuru’s race became the Commander in chief, having eleven divisions of the Kaurava princes under his command, like Vasava of the celestial forces. Highly intelligent Shikhandin, protected by the blessed Arjuna, became the leader of the seven divisions of the sons of Pandu. Then Shikhandin, in great battle, helped by the holder of Gandiva, killed, with innumerable arrows, the son of Ganga, fighting bravely. Lying on a bed of arrows, Bhishma waited like an ascetic till the sun, leaving his southward path, entered on his northerly course, when that hero died. Then Drona, that foremost of all persons conversant with arms, that greatest of men under Durjodhana, like Kavya himself of the lord of the Daityas, became the Commander-in-chief. That foremost of twice-born persons, ever boasting of his prowess in battle, was supported by the residue of the Kaurava-army consisting then of nine Aukshauhinis, and protected by Kripa and Brishma and others. Dhrishtadyumna, familiar with many powerful weapons, and gifted with great intelligence, became the leader of the Pandavas. He was protected by Bhima like Varuna protected by Mitra. That great hero, always desirous of comparing his strength with Drona, supported by the Pandava army, and recollecting the wrongs inflicted (by Drona) on his father (Drupada, the king of the Panchalas) performed great feats in battle. In that battle between Drona and the son of Prishata, the kings assembled from various realms were nearly rooted out. That furious battle lasted for five days. At the conclusion of that period, Drona, exhausted, succumbed to Dhrishtadyumna. After that, Karna became the Commander-in-chief of Durjodhana’s forces. He was supported in battle by the residue of the Kaurava army, which numbered five Aukshaubinis. The Suta’s son Karna, though a dreadful warrior, encountering Partha, came to his end on the second day, like an insect encountering a burning fire. Then, in the great battle that took place, the royal son of Dhritarasthra was killed by Bhimasena, after displaying his great prowess, in the presence of many kings.\*”

The quotation exposes the hollowness of the unjust charges of unlawful tactics practised by the Pandavas on the battlefield.

“In this frail life are worthy to be blest  
Held glorious and immortal when at rest.”

Rama and Krishna, Sita and Radha receive the greatest adoration in the religion of the Hindus. The two beautiful ideal princesses, Sita and Draupadi, are original and unique characters in the Epic world. Epics describe the death and destruction of great kings and kingdoms for selfish wordly love. The Indian Epics go further than this. They describe religious worship, morality, law, national pride and civilization, and present ideal examples of filial, parental, conjugal, fraternal love and friendship ripening in a true love of self-sacrifice and transcending into divine love, the essence of religion and nationality in Ancient India. All of them descended from the well-known families of Vedic India,

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\*The Mahabharata Chapter LX, Asvamedha Parva, page 72 (M. N. Dutt’s English Translation). Verses 10, 8-9, 11—19, 21 and 30.

the Yadavas, the Kurus and Pandavas as well as the Itshakus. This speaks of the age of the Indian Epics.

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have fascinated the greatest scholars of the day all over the world. It has been admitted by the greatest Western Sanskrit scholars, like the late lamented Professor Max Muller, that no Epic of the world can approach the Indian Epics both in conception and execution. The Mahabharata, notwithstanding its unwieldy mass and alleged inconsistency, is one of the grandest and greatest Epics of the world. Superficial reading will not make anyone realise its beauty. It demands an extensive and thorough knowledge of ancient civilisation and its growth from Sanskrit literature and philosophy. The Ramayana is not so difficult as the Mahabharata as will appear from the fact that the former has no commentator. The Mahabharata has many commentators, and amongst them Nilkantha seems to have been the latest and most revered and authoritative. He has not annotated every section of the Mahabharata but only dealt with the most important and their respective relations one with another.

It is indeed regrettable that Western scholars have not studied the different views of these annotators or even Nilkantha, but were simply carried away by their own imagination and made deductions or findings according to their own angle of vision. East is East and West is West, like the Poles asunder, and so very different that they cannot meet. The Vedas mention the names of Pururad, Santanu and Devapi, and the Mahabharata adds the names of their descendants, whose names have now passed into familiar Indian proverbs which convey easily to the mass the clear, unequivocal implications their names signify in common parlance even now. Dhritarashtra and Pandu, Bidura and Bhishma, Yudhishthira and Duryodhana, Arjuna and Karna, Bhima and Sakuni, Sri Krishna and Balarama, Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadra and Satyawati have been the moving spirits and centre of attraction in the Mahabharata, as Rama, Ravana, Bharata, Bhavisana, Lakshmana, Kakeyi and Sita have been in the Ramayana. Dasaratha and Meghnada are the great sacrifices on the altar of worldly love of a father and a son, which certainly speaks of a later age than the Mahabharata.

There is no commentator of the Ramayana, which proves that nothing difficult was found which required the help of a commentator. No one can blame Western Sanskrit scholars for all the adverse criticism they so gratuitously offered on so hard a work, requiring so many commentators in the land of its birth and confused and enlarged at the time of alien Governments, when the question of Hinduism and Hindu scripture were left to the mercy of cruel times, and foreign invasions and misrepresentation. They expressed their honest convictions with-

out thinking for a moment that they would thus be betraying their ignorance and lack of necessary information on the subject

"The poem in its present form absolutely takes the part of the Pandavas, and describes the Pandavas as not only brave beyond measure, but also as noble and good, and on the other hand represents the Kauravas as treacherous and mischievous,—the poem, in remarkable self-contradiction, relates that all the heroes of the Kauravas fall through treachery or in unfair fight. It is still more striking that all the treachery emanates from Kṛṣṇa, that he is always the instigator of all the deceit and defends the conduct of the Pandavas. In the mouths of these bards those alterations were then undertaken which made the Pandavas appear in a favourable light and the Kauravas in an unfavourable one, without its being possible to eradicate completely the original tendency of the songs. In our Mahabharata, the nucleus of the Epic, the description of the great battle is placed in the mouth of Sanjaya, the charioteer of Dhritarastra, that is, in the mouth of the bard of the Kauravas. It is precisely in these battle scenes that the Kauravas appear in the most favourable light. The whole Mahabharata, on the other hand, is recited, according to the frame-story contained in Book I, by Vyasa's pupil, Vaisampayana at the snake sacrifice of Janamejaya. This Janamejaya, however, is regarded as a descendant of the Pandava Arjuna, which agrees well with the fact that, in the Mahabharata as a whole, the Pandavas are preferred to the Kauravas."

It will be seen that Janamejaya himself had misgivings, like the Western scholars, and called upon Vyasa to clear the points, and this formed the nucleus of the Mahabharata. There is hardly any justification for making reckless and wrong allegations against the Pandavas when the bard Sanjaya, of the opposite camp, king Dhritarastra and Gandhari spoke in favour of the Pandavas. The translations of the texts about the version related herein will speak for themselves —

"Sanjaya said —Alas, as I have seen everything with my own eyes, I shall tell you all. Hear me patiently. Great indeed is your fault. O king, these lamentations of yours are as useless as the construction of embankments when the waters have receded from a flooded field. O foremost of the Bharatas, do not indulge in grief. The decrees of Destiny are wonderful and inevitable. O foremost of the Bharatas, do not give way to grief, for these things are not unique. If in days gone by, you had prevented Kunti's son Yudhishthira or your own sons, from the tournament at dice, then this calamity would not have overtaken you. If, again, on the eve of the battle, you had prevented the enraged parties from joining in the battle, then this calamity would not have overtaken you. If, again, you had previously induced the other Kurus to put an end to the existence of the refractory Durjodhana, then this calamity would never have overtaken you. If, indeed, you had done one of these alternatives, then the Pandavas, the Panchalas, the Vrishnis, and the other rulers of earth had never had the reason for blaming you for your perverted understanding. If, again, doing the duty of a father, you had (by directing Durjodhana on the path of virtue) compelled him to follow in the same path, then this calamity would never have befallen you. You are the wisest men on the face of the earth. But in spite of your being so, you accepted the counsel of Karna, Durjodhana and Sakuni, abandoning the ways of eternal virtue. Therefore, O king, all these lamentations of yours that I have heard,—you who are absorbed in the enjoyment of worldly objects—appear to me like honey mixed



with poison. In days gone by, Krishna did not hold king Yudhishthira the son of Pandu, or Bhishma, or Drona, in so high an estimation as he did hold you, O king. But when he came to know you fallen from the duties of royalty, that time forward, he did not respect you as before. When your sons applied harsh epithets to the sons of Pritha, you assumed an indifferent attitude. The result of that indifference of yours has now overtaken you—you who long to see your sons installed on the throne. O sinless one, the royalty you inherited from your forefathers, is now going to slip off your hands, or on the other hand, you will have it obtaining it from the sons of Pritha (who would certainly snatch it away from your sons after slaying them). The dominions of the Kurus and their fame, had been required by Pandu, and the right-behaving sons of Pandu have again added to that fame and those dominions. All those endeavours of theirs became fruitless when indeed their interests clashed with yours inasmuch as they were despoiled of their ancestral sovereignty by your very avaricious self. So O king the fact of your attributing blame to your sons at the time of the actual warfare and the fact of your expatiating on their faults, indeed, seem very unbecoming.\*

"Then did the daughter of king Surabhi afraid of the extinction of her race, snay out of anger these words which were virtuous and conducive to the benefit of her inhuman and wicked souled son Durjodhana in the midst of these kings. "Let these rulers of the earth who have entered this royal council as also these regenerate Rishis and all others in this council hear what I am going to say about the sin committed by yourself O wretch and your ministers and followers. The kingdom is obtainable by us in a certain fixed order this has been the custom with our race, but you, O you of sinful intellect and of very inhuman deeds, desire unjustly to ruin the kingdom of the Kurus. The wise Dhritarastra is now established on the throne and under him as a subordinate is Vidura of great foresight; superseding these two how can you O Durjodhana desire the kingdom out of folly? The king himself and Vidura of great soul are, so long as Bhishma is alive, but his subordinates in fact, owing to his being conversant with virtue, the one born of the river (Ganga), that foremost of kings does not desire the kingship. This kingdom, incapable of being subjugated belongs to Pandu and now his sons are lords over it and none else. This entire kingdom coming from their father goes to the sons of Pandu, and to their sons and grandsons. What that foremost among the Kurus, that great souled one of divine vows ever attached to truth endowed with intelligence, says, should in its entirety, be done by us, for the sake of our kingdom and the duties of our order. Let this ruler of men as also Vidura by the command of the one of great vows speak the same thing that is an act that should be done by our well-wishers who should place virtue above all consideration. Let the son of Dharma Yudhishthira rule over the kingdom of the Kurus, obtained justly, led by Dhritarastra and placing the son of Shantanu at the helm of affairs †

Vasudena said—Words like these having been spoken by Gandhari that lord of men Dhritarastra said these words to Durjodhana in the midst of the kings 'O lord of men, O Durjodhana, listen to what I am going to say my dear son, and act according to that if you entertain respect for your father. It will be well with you. That lord of creatures Soma was the first who begot the race of Kurus, and sixth in descent from Soma was Yayati the son of Nabusa. He had five sons, the best among royal sages and of them Yadu of great energy was the first, and was the lord. Younger than he was Puru and he was our ancestor, he

\* Professor M. N. Dutt's "Translation of the Mahabharata", Drona Parva, Chapter LXXXVI, page 125, verses 1-17

† Professor M. N. Dutt's "Translation of the Mahabharata", Chapter CXLVIII, page 204. Udyoga Parva, verses 25-36

was brought forth by Sharmistha, the daughter of Vaishampayana. Yadu, O foremost among the Bharatas, was the son of Heravani, and was therefore the grandson of Bhukta. He was full of immeasurable energy. The ancestor of the Yadavas, endued with strength and prowess as he was, being full of pride and vanity and wicked intelligence, insulted the Kshatriyas. He did not act up to the instructions of his father, being stupefied by the pride of his strength and having never sustained a defeat, he insulted his father and his brothers. In the four quarters of the globe, Yadu was the strongest man and having brought all the rulers of men under subjection he lived in the city called after the elephant. His father, Yayati, born of Saluta, being very much angry with him, cursed his son O son of Gandhari, and exiled him from the kingdom. Those brothers who followed the lord of the elder ruler, vain of his strength were also cursed. The great king Yayati, having cursed these sons placed his second son Puru who remained devoted to him, on the throne which indeed was suitable. It is evident thus that even the eldest son can be superseded and deprived of the kingdom, and even a younger son can get the kingdom for his attentions to the aged. Thus was also the grandfather of my father—conversant with all virtues. Pratiapa the ruler of the universe and known in the four worlds. That king among the rulers of the earth, while ruling his kingdom, never neglected his three sons of renown and having the attributes of the gods. Of them Herapava was the foremost, eldest, and then came Vallika, and the third Shantanu that wise man was my grandfather. Derapi that best among kings though endued with great energy had a defect in his skin, but he was a virtuous man, a speaker of truth and ever devoted to attending on his father. Derapi was honoured by all the subjects, ministers and respected by the good and he was loved by all—the old and the young. He was benevolent, attached to truth and devoted to the good of all creatures and ever obeyed the command of his father as also of the Brahmanas. He was the dear brother of Vallika and also of the great soul Shantanu, in fact among all those great souled men excellent brotherly feeling existed.

In course of time, that old king, the best among rulers of men, had all arrangements made for the installation according to the holy books (of his son). That lord had all auspicious arrangements made but the Brahmanas and the old men amongst the citizens with the subjects of the province, all dissuaded him from installing Derapi and that ruler of men, having heard of the exclusion of his elder son from the installation had his voice choked with tears and became sorrowful for his son. Though he was benevolent, conversant with virtue, attached to truth, and loved by his subjects, yet he had a defect in his skin. The gods do not approve of that ruler of men who has a defect in his limbs. So saying, those foremost among the unborn dissuaded that for most among the rulers of men. Derapi too, who was defective of one limb, saying that ruler of men with his heart pained and struck with grief for his son dissuaded him from carrying out his intentions and went to the woods. Vallika, too, giving up his kingdom, established himself in the family of his maternal uncle, and abandoning his father and brother he obtained a very wealthy kingdom. Being commanded by Vallika, Santanu, well known in this world, on the retirement of his father, became, O king, the king in that kingdom. In the same way, myself though the eldest, was excluded from the kingdom owing to the defect in my limbs, O Bharata in favour of Pandu, endued with good understanding, after due reflection. That ruler of men Pandu too obtained the kingdom though he was young and at his death this kingdom, O chastiser of foes, belongs to his sons. Myself having never participated in the kingdom, how do you desire it, being the son of one who was never a king. You are not a king, and yet you desire to take another's property. Yudhishthira is the son of a king and has a great soul, and this kingdom justly goes to him. He being endued with great attributes

is the lord of the Kuru race as also the ruler of the kingdom. He is attached to truth and is never beside his senses, he follows the teachings of the Holy books and does good to his friends, he is an honest man and is dear to his subjects, he feels for his well wishers, has his senses under control and is the lord of honest men. Forgiveness, patience, self restraint, sincerity, devotion to truth, a good appreciation of the Holy books, benevolence, love to creatures and ability to rule justly, all these attributes of a king are in Yudhishtira. You, on the other hand, are the son of one who has never been a king, you lead the life of a dishonourable man, you are coretons, ever have wicked intentions towards your friends, O you not endowed with humility, how under these circumstances can you take this kingdom which belongs to others and which comes to the successors according to a certain order. With your folly removed, give over one half of the kingdom with its animals and royal garments, and the remainder will be enough for your own living and that of your younger brothers \*"

These words of good advice had no effect on Durjodhana as also the advice given by the parents and the patriarchs Bhishma and Drona, for Durjodhana sternly refused the peace proposal of Krishna on behalf of the Pandavas with these significant words —

"O Krishna when I depended on others the Pandavas had that kingdom which ought not to have been given away. It might be out of ignorance or fear the Pandus got it, but now they were required to win it. So long as I have strength in my arms I would not without fight part with even a piece of land of the dimension of the point of a sharp needle †"

The gist of the reply of Krishna settles the characteristic traits of Durjodhana. This is as follows —

"O Fool! you seem to think that there is nothing against your conduct towards the Pandavas, but all the kings present here know full well how you, being jealous of their prosperity, you in consultation with Sakuni arranged a game of dice and deprived them unjustly of their wealth and property and disgraced them in every way. Who else but yourself could ill treat the wife of your elder brother in the manner as you did in the open Council Hall, using all sorts of abusive language with your friend Karna? You spared no pains to destroy them from their early youth by employing all sorts of evil methods, e.g. snakes, rope, water and fire. If you do not give them their just paternal property and share in the kingdom, know ye wicked fellow, you shall have to do so when you will be overthrown and deprived of your prosperity by them. Your desire to die the death of a hero will then be fulfilled. You are disregarding the good advice of your well wishers. What you intended doing will not lead you to any fame or virtue. Peace is the most desirable thing for you but alas! that you could not discern through the weakness of your intellect."

His open censure on the Kuru elders, headed by Bhishma and Drona, is no doubt worthy of mention —

"It is your great fault that you do not restrain the wicked Durjodhana, who had been guilty of very great misconducts in your very face. You have bright examples before you how the throne of the old Bhoja King usurped by Kansa, was recovered by me. Nor is this all. The great Dharma by the command of

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\* Professor M. N. Dutt's "English Translation of the Mahabharata" Chapter CXLIX, pages 204 to 206 Udyoga Parva, verses 1-36

† English Translation of Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLVII

the Paramesthî made over all the Danavas and Daityas to Varuna and they were all imprisoned in the sea. Now it is your turn to make over the wicked Durjodhann, Karna, Sakuni and Dushasana to the Pandavas bound head to foot if you do not want extinction of the Kshatriya race in the fight."

The meeting of the two important relatives Kuntî, mother of the Pandavas, and then messenger of peace Krishna is a very important event in Epic history. The majestic Queen of Pandu, the model of forbearance, virtue and martial spirit tells as a lesson to her sons the story of Biduhî in whose real interpretation success will lie\*. Here the 200<sup>th</sup> Indra recited the words of the heavenly voices heard on the births of the two heroes Bhîma and Arjuna, and in Santi Parva† the great Bhisma admonished Yudhishthira, that the line of his conduct was not in consonance with the boon of his birth with which his parents were blessed. The questions are very important as they show the position of the parties in relation to past history and the just claim of the parties to the throne by the responsible head Dhritarastra and his Queen. The boon of birth of the Pandu heroes was spoken of by Bhisma and Kuntî, which settled the question of fancy tales of Divine Birth.

The great fight of the Mahabharata was for the division of the paternal properties and that of the Ramayana was for punishing the demon Ravana, who stole the Queen of Rama and kept her in captivity. In the case of the former it was a fight in which all the kings of India took sides with the contending parties, whereas in the latter no other kings or human beings but the brother of the demon king Ravana and the brother of the monkey king, Bally, were implicated. In the Ramayana the exploits of Rama were chronicled with the poetic embellishment of Kavya literature, whereas in the Mahabharata the heroic deeds of the Kurus, Pandavas and their respective followers were described graphically. Each section deals with the deeds of the principal heroes of the campaign, a style not to be found in the Ramayana. If the Ramayana had been written first then its method surely would have been followed by the Mahabharata. But it was not.

European scholars have found the Ramayana an Epic according to their ideas, but it is not according to the views of the author. It is a Kavya out and out and not an Epic in the true sense of the Indian

\* (18) This story which is called Jaya (victory) should be heard by one who is desirous of victory, and hearing it one conquers the world speedily and vanquishes his enemies. (19) This story makes a woman bring forth a son and a heroic son, a pregnant woman hearing it repeated many times certainly brings forth a hero. Mbh. Udyoga Parva, page 182, Chapter CXXXVI verses 18-19.

† (22) The conduct you wish to follow, urged on by your intelligence and wisdom, is not quite of a piece with those blessings which your father Pandu or your mother Kuntî used to solicit for you. (Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXV, page 112)

view. The Mahabharata is not a book of one family of kings of Ajodhya, like the Ramayana. It is a book in which all the princes of India, whose forefathers laid down their lives in the famous battle of Kurukshetra, were interested. The exploits of the All-India heroes were given the honour of a section of the great book in the description of the Great War with the history of the time and were preserved in the realms of the descendants of those heroes by their court reciters, to be recited at state functions and sacrifices. This is the true cause of the unusual growth of the Mahabharata, and the many repetitions and sometimes even contradictions in it. All these sections were strung together by the princes to make them a consistent whole. It was during this process that the Ramayana was introduced into the Mahabharata as its consistent part, being the glory of the kings of Ajodhya, who did not play any prominent part in the battle of Kurukshetra. The substance of the historical truth about Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Salya can be gathered as well as why the old patriarchs fought for the unjust side of Duryodhana. This should first be seen and learned.

Bhishma is one of the greatest heroes and wise-men of the Bharata race. His education is described by Vyasa as follows —

"Vaishampayana said — Then Vyasa O King that foremost of all persons conversant with the Vedas, looking at that ancient and omniscient person viz., Narada, said,—If O King, you wish to hear of duties and morality at length, then ask Bhishma, O mighty armed one that old grandfather of the Kurus. Conversant with all duties and endowed with universal knowledge that son of Bhagirathi will remove all your doubts regarding the difficult subjects of duties. That goddess, the celestial river of three courses gave birth to him. He saw with his physical eyes all the celestials headed by Indra. Having pleased with his dutiful services the celestial Rishis, headed by Brihaspati, he acquired a knowledge of royal duties. That foremost one among the Kurus acquired a knowledge also of that science, with its interpretations which Ushanas and the Rishi who is the preceptor of the celestials knowledge. Having practised rigid vows, that mighty-armed one obtained a knowledge of all the Vedas and their branches, from Vashishtha and from Chyavana of Bhrigu's race. In the days of yore he studied under the eldest son of the grandfather himself, viz., the effulgent Sanat Kumara, well conversant with the truths of mental and spiritual science. He learnt the duties in full of the Yatis from Marikudaya. That foremost of men learnt science from Rama and Shakra. Although born as man, his death itself is in his own hands. Although childless, yet he has many blissful regions hereafter as heard by us. Rishis of great merit were his courtiers. There is nothing on earth which is unknown to him."\*

It will be seen that Bhishma is more a romantic personage than an actual being. If his descent according to genealogy is to be considered, he could not see Indra in person, he could not be the pupil of Sanat-kumar, Chyavan, and Brihaspati and at the same time read lectures to Yudhishthira. Of course the ancient sages were very careful men and

they saved the question of immortality with certain persons like Parasurama, Bali etc., by making them immortals, but such cannot be the case with Bhishma. His birth and dying at will do not synchronise with the said sages and deny Indra. He saw and learnt his lessons. Besides, neither his name nor those of Drona or Salya, who were the reputed Commanders-in-Chief, were mentioned in the table of contents in Adi Parva, Chapter 1, or another table of contents in Adi Parva, Chapter 62. Also, his fight with Parashurama for a trivial cause, that of not taking part in revenge; Gandrabi Chitrangada, who killed Bhishma's brother of the same name, seems rather strange. Vedabati's transformation into Sita in the next life and Amba's transformation into Shikhandi cannot form part of Epic history, though they are mentioned in the Uttarakanda Ramayana and Mahabharata, respectively. In the current Mahabharata the character of Bhishma (Debabrata) is inconsistent and anomalous. The same can be said about Drona and Salya. There is hardly any justification for Bhishma or Drona or Salya fighting for Duryodhana when they were at heart praying for the victory of the Pandavas. It is clearly said in Bhishma Parva, Chapter 13, that depending on Bhishma's strength Duryodhana dared to play a deceitful game of dice. There is a clear mention by Sanjaya in Chapter 65 of the Bhishma Parva that the Pandavas did not fight wrongfully.

Sanjaya said—Hear (I sing) with perfect attention, and hearing do you understand what you hear. There was nothing the result of incantation and nothing the production of illusion. Neither, O monarch, did the sons of Pandu create any new source of apprehension, those warriors endowed with strength are fighting their battles according to the rules of fair combat. The sons of Pritha, O Bharata, desirous of securing illustrious fame, ever perform all acts—even the maintenance of their lives—in perfect accordance with the rules of morality. Attended by excellent prosperity and endowed with great strength and conforming to all morality, they never turn back from the fight. Victory ever attends righteousness. For this reason, O ruler of earth, the sons of Pritha are unsinkable in battle and are ever courted by victory. Your sons are of wicked intentions and are intent on perpetrating sin, they are cruel and of low deeds, therefore are they always worsted in the battle O ruler of men. Various heartless injuries are done to the Pandavas by your sons, like men of low extraction. You are disregarding all these offences of your sons.

Bhishma was a great admirer of Krishna, if not his ardent follower. It is inconceivable that his name was not mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata where Bidura, Kunti and other characters of the Mahabharata who were attached to Krishna, were given. Bhishma however, cannot, be justified as a historical character who can be identified with the title of Debabrata, especially when he excused his fighting an unjust cause on the grounds of being maintained out of the resources of the Kurus. Bhishma's birth mythology is not supported by any Vedic accounts and necessarily he cannot belong to such an early age as against the time which the genealogy of his birth fixes. Bhishma is not mentioned in the

family history just quoted (in Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLVII) Bhishma's birth is ascribed to the sacred river Ganges, which is altogether a myth. The dialogue between father and son in the Mahabharata conveying this important point illustrating the sacrifice of Bhishma was translated by Professor Max Muller thus —

"Thou dost advise that I should please  
With sacrifice the deities  
Such rites I disregard as vain  
Through these can none perfection gain  
Why sate the gods, at cruel feasts,  
With flesh and blood of slaughtered beasts?  
For other sacrifices I  
Will offer unremittingly,  
The sacrifice of calm, of truth,  
The sacrifice of peace, of ruth,  
Of life serenely, purely, spent  
Of thought profound on Brahma bent  
Who offers these, may death defy,  
And hope for immortality

And then thou says't that I should wed,  
And sons should gain to tend me, dead,  
By offering pious gifts, to seal,  
When I am gone, my spirit's weal  
But I shall ask no pious zeal  
Of sons to guard my future weal  
No child of mine shall ever boast  
His rites have saved his father's ghost  
Of mine own bliss I'll pay the price,  
And be myself my sacrifice "

Pleasure, health and wealth grow out of the rivers and the resort of the great god Narayana is water. It is for this reason that the images of gods are thrown into the river after worship given now. It is well-known that the orthodox Hindus offer water to the manes of this godlike Bhishma even now along with their forefathers, so great is the popularity of the Hindu Epics in India. Bhishma followed in the wake of Poru, but Rama of the Ikshaku race went into exile for his step mother.

It was a time to try dutiful sons, but in the case of Yudhishthira it was a time of jealousy between cousins due to the uncle's indulgence and the intrigue of their relatives. The dramatic Mahabharata, which introduced Bhishma's prowess as the mainstay for the attainment of their vicious ends at the dice play, is nothing less than the murder of the whole thing—in fact, there the death of Bhishma took place. That Bhishma, who failed to answer the intricate question put by Draupadi in the dice hall, could not be the preceptor

of Yudhishthira, whom Bhishma called upon to answer the questions put to him. Bhishma was made to play the very low role of a retainer of the Kuru Court. He with Drona, Kripa, etc., were made to fight for Durjodhana against their own personal independent will, as they avowed that they were quite helpless in having to fight an unjust cause as they were maintained by the Kuru Court. Likewise Bhishma became a reciter of old legends he knew as instructive to the ruler of the Kuru Court when he won the war. The dutiful Bhishma recited these even when he was dying and lying in state for the proper time to die. This is nothing less than a romance.

Yayati called upon his sons to prove their filial love and piety and bestowed the throne on the only dutiful son Poru. This is what the Bharata Samhita describes. The Mahabharata took the son of the ideal monarch Santanu as its model and called him God-like-vow-observer or Debabrata or Gangeya.

“Vaishampayana said — Having said this, the goddess disappeared then and there. Taking her son with her, she went away to the place she wished to go. That son of Santanu was named both Gangeya and Devabrata, and he excelled his father in all accomplishments. Santanu then went to his own capital with a sorrowful heart. I shall now narrate to you the many accomplishments of Santanu. And the great fortune of the illustrious king of the Bharata race, the history of whom is called this effulgent Mahabharata.”

The next chapter gives up to verse 20 the glorious account of the King Santanu and the origin of the name Santanu is found in Chapter XCV, verse 45, that those who touched the hand of the king were restored to youth, feeling indescribable pleasure. The pious King Santanu retired to the forest after long enjoyment of all worldly pleasures in the company of women, wealth and prosperity. After this the important meeting of the son Bhishma, his mother Ganga and King Santanu is described in Chapter XXI, Adī Parva, in a novel manner, which speaks more of poetic imagination than actual credible historical fact. No reason whatsoever was given for the separation between the father and the son. The king could not recognise the son nor the mother at the meeting. The mother spoke of the son's education and qualifications and Santanu took the youth to his capital and installed him as his heir apparent to the throne. Then the alleged son not only gave up his title to the throne but promised to remain Brahmachari throughout his life, entitling him to the name of Bhishma and the boon of dying at will for the sake of his father's love affairs. In the same chapter the marriage of his father is described and the son is said to have performed

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\* Professor M. N. Dutt's "English Translation of the Mahabharata Adī Parva", Chapter XCIX, page 145, verses 45—48



the office of the go-between, which is an unheard of thing in any history of the world

This chapter is the most conspicuous for contriving as it does contradictory statements on the character of King Santanu. The river Ganges became shallow by the arrow of Bhishma, which attracted the notice of Santanu. Nothing can be made out of this. If Ganga is relieved of the curse as she disappeared in the previous chapter she can hardly be expected to come back again to deliver the son to the father in the manner she did. Then again Vasistha, the ideal example of forbearance, could not have been capable of cursing the Basus for their trivial omission in not making obeisance to him. He was famous for not having cursed or taken any action against the murderer of his own son Sakti. Bhishma is described as a great invincible warrior who learnt arms from Parasurama and defeated him in a famous fight described in the Mahabharata. But this cannot be so. Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, already curbed the powers of Parasurama at the time of breaking the bow of Siva, described in the Ramayana and Purana. Parasurama ceased to be the teacher or wielder of arms and he was banished from India proper after his sacrifice by Kasyapa the priest of the Bharata kings.

' Having made the Earth shorn of Kshatriyas for twenty one times the powerful Bhargava, at the completion of a horse sacrifice, gave away the Earth as sacrificial present to Kasyapa. For preserving the residence of the Kshatriyas, Kasyapa, O King, pointing with his hand that still held the sacrificial ladle, said these words—O great sage go to the shores of the southern Ocean. You should not, O Rama, live within my kingdom. At these words Ocean all on a sudden made for Jamadagni's son, on his other shore a region called Surparaka. Kasyapa also, O king having accepted the Earth in gift, made a present of it to the Brahmanas and entered into the woods.\*'

Vasistha or Bhrigu were the usurpers of the post of the priesthood of the Kasyapa family to which Narada belonged. A Kasayapa descendant was coming to bring to life King Parikshita, but he was won over by the Naga King (Astika Parva). There is the Aila-Kasyap discourse in the Shanti Parva, which speaks for itself. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma was found to be a follower of the Narayana Krishna cult, but he is not conspicuously mentioned in the Srimad-Bhagabata Purana, where Bidura, the Pandavas and Kunti were all mentioned as renowned followers of that cult. What is more, even Duryodhana was mentioned as a background for good character. This proves that the introduction of Bhishma into the Mahabharata was of a much later date.

Bhishma is not an historical character, nor is he connected with the mythology of India. He is a romantic character, approaching divi-

nity, introduced in the same way as many Greek Epic characters were introduced after the Indian fashion. Bhishma's only greatness lies in his mission for the marriage of his alleged father Santanu by his vow of sacrifice and nothing else—a fact quite unnatural and against the true character of King Santanu. No sensible father would stoop to such a level, and it is inconceivable that a son should be so feared when he had not yet ascended the throne and the father, who wanted to marry the girl of a Dasa King, was in possession of the throne and power.

The real meaning of the boon of dying at will connected with Bhishma may be explained. The man whose inclinations are not suited to his age feels the full burden of his years and dies at will. The man who kept quiet at the dice play and would not answer the questions put to him by Draupadi cannot be believed to have been fit to give lectures on political history, philosophy, religion and emancipation. There is a Hindi Mahabharata by Soubal Singh Chowana where the question was dramatically and tauntingly raised by Draupadi. Besides, as a positive proof of noble birth, Bhishma's instinct of honour should have revolted at the sight of such a dastardly act as the dragging of Draupadi in the public Dice Hall, for she was no other than the universally respected wife of the ideal king and elder cousin of Durjodhana. The learned annotator Nilkantha's views are clear on the point.

The war sections including Bhishma Parva, were not important as recording the war tactics of great geniuses and the truth of events or the valour of the contending heroes of the field, but prove to the world that things are not what they seem to be in relation to virtue and vice. When the senior relatives and preceptors support an unjust cause and aggressors in their attempt to rob the lawful owners then there is no sin or shame in killing such men. This is clearly shown in the account of King Dandi, where the gods headed by Sri Krishna fought against the Kurus and the Pandavas and were defeated by them. This is a Pauranic account, but it had an Epic connection. This speaks of Bhishma's greatness, for he gave shelter to King Dandi when no one else dared do so. This is the true test of noble birth.

There is a reference to one King Danda in the Uttarakanda Ramayana (Cantos 93 and 94) as having outraged the modesty of Araya, the daughter of Bhṛigu. The king and his kingdom were destroyed by the curse of the sage. The Apsara Urbasi, who was cursed and assumed the form of a mare, was in the possession of King Dandi. Sri Krishna called upon the king to surrender her to him, which he refused to do, and that was the cause of the fight between Devas and the Kurus Pandavas.

BHISMA was not living with his father when he was introduced by the Ganga, whom Santanu could not recognise as his wife or the mother of the child. If Bhishma was really living at the Kuru Court he must have been found on the Ganges bank as a stray, unclaimed child like Drona and Kripa, reared up by King Santanu, and was in no way connected with the Kuru race. If this was so, the general public would not have annually offered him oblation at the tarpan ceremony—like those who were childless—at the time of doing it to their own forefathers.

The Hindu shrines in India were connected with past mythological and historical characters, but no trace is found of Bhishma anywhere in India, which makes one think Bhishma was a fictitious being. The historical elements in the Mahabharata can only be traced if characters like Bhishma are first discriminated against and eliminated. It will be seen that nothing is said about the mysterious origin of the sons of Pandu. Had there really been anything like that which found a place in the dramatic Mahabharata of the rhapsodists then it would not have been overlooked by Duryodhana, his father and his friends at the time of consideration of the claim of the sons of the Pandu to the half of the kingdom. Veteran politicians like Dhritarashtra, who was described as being blind to his own faults and a severe censor of other's acts, would not have failed to make capital use of the question of the mysterious births of the sons of Pandu.

It is one thing to discover a truth, but very different to make others see it. All discoveries of truth were laughed at in the beginning. The ancient history of the Aryan race cannot be taught by the Epic unless one has fully learnt, marked and digested the three phases of the light the Epic sheds, as a mythological history, romance, and a drama. Historical facts when dramatised tell upon the imagination of the people better than mere fiction or romance. It is for this reason that historical facts have got to be ascertained first and romance and fiction should be exposed and their purpose told. The three main branches of learning are history, science and art. The first comprehends genuine records of the past, the second examines their truth from knowledge of the characters, inclinations and inferences therefrom, while the third includes all that is beautiful, charming and graceful in metre, language sound, colour, and object to present to human perception what is perfect. The Epic assumes that state, but in process of time is diverted by wrong handling to satisfy a vitiated taste, and has deteriorated to its present state.

It has been shown from the text of the Mahabharata what were the family history of the Kurus, the claims of the Pandavas and the conduct

of Durjodhana. Now it remains to be shown why, like a coward, Yudhis-thira and his brothers suffered the indignities said to have been inflicted on Draupadi, the heroine of the dramatic Epic Mahabharata. Such a thing did not happen in the historic Epic, for Bhishma was a romantic personage and the table of contents does not mention anything about him or Draupadi. The verse in the Adī Parva and the table of contents clearly state that, solicited by Janmejaya and the thousand Brahmanas, Vyasa taught the Mahabharata to his disciple Vaisampayana, who recited the Bharata at the interval of the sacrifice where Vyasa fully described the glory of the Kuru race, the virtue of Gandhari, constancy of Kunti, goodness of the Pandavas, wisdom of Vidura, with the greatness of Krishna against the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra. It was composed of 24000 verses exclusive of episodes, which is the real Bharata. (*Vide* 97—101 Slokas, Chapter I, Adī Parva).

The next list of heroes of the contending parties in the dramatic Mahabharata are as follows —The tree of virtue and religion is Yudhis-thira, Arjuna its trunk, Bhima its branches, the two sons of Madri its flowers and fruit, and the very roots are Krishna, Brahma (sacrifice) and Brahmanas, whereas Durjodhana is the tree of passion, Karna its trunk, Sakuni its branches, Dussasana its fruit and flowers and its roots Dhritarastra (*Vide* 108-9 Slokas, Adī Parva, Chapter I). There is no mention whatsoever of Bhishma and Drona or Salya in these important verses, nor is any mention made there of the great heroine Draupadi.

The mention of the wailings of Dhritarastra in the table of contents is not only out of place and an anachronism, but is contradictory to the body of the Mahabharata. The table of contents before the wailings of Dhritarastra gives the cause of the dice play and makes no mention of the dragging of Draupadi.

There is no justification whatsoever for putting in another table of contents the wailings of Dhritarastra, which by their language and style are very modern and an interpolation of the worst type. The translation of the verse where the dice play with its cause is referred to in the table of contents is —

“After killing Jarasandha, proud of his prowess through the wise counsel of Krishna and by the prowess of Bhima and Arjuna, Yudhis-thira acquired the right to perform the Rajasuya, which abounded in provisions and offerings and was full of transcendent merits. Durjodhana came to this sacrifice. When he saw on all sides the great wealth of the Pandavas,—the offerings, the precious stones, gold and jewels, elephants and horses, valuable textures, garments and mantles, shawls and furs, carpets made of the skin of the Bakaṭa,—he was filled with envy, and became very angry. When he saw the hall of assembly, beautifully constructed by Moya after the celestial court, he became exceedingly sorry (To chagrin him more) when he was confused at certain architectural deceptions, Bhishma sneered at him, before Vasudeva,

saying he was of low birth. It was represented to Dhritarashtra that his son, though he was partaking of various objects of enjoyment and valuable things, was becoming pale, lean and meagre. Out of affection for him the blind king gave his son permission to play at dice (with the Pandavas). When Krishna came to know this, he became very angry. And being displeased, he did nothing to stop the dispute, but overlooked the fatal game and other horrible unjust deeds that were the result of it \* "

Now the incidents just referred to in the above quotation are described in Shanti Parva Chapter CXXIV and in the next chapter Yudhishthira openly said that he was disappointed, as he thought Duryodhana would not fight but would give him half the kingdom. This is the history of the claim and demand of Yudhishthira, but such was not the case in the demand of the Pancha Grama (five villages), which is not referred to anywhere in the table of contents. It has both a metaphysical and ironical meaning, this challenge by Krishna at the Kuru Court. In Daksha Samhita, 7th Chapter, Slokas 17-18, is explained the meaning of Pancha Grama with the definition of an unconquerable hero. It would be a sad spectacle if Yudhishthira descended to such a low level as to be satisfied with the five villages which was all Dhritarashtra wanted to give the Pandavas after the first dice play. It will not be out of place here to point out that the table of contents nowhere refers to the second dice play, which is more than dramatic.

The annotator Nilkantha has explained the object of writing Birata Parva and how it formed part of the Mahabharata. This bears out what is said in the Daksha Samhita, already referred to, about Pancha Grama. The hero of the Indian Epic of the metaphysical world was Yudhishthira, on whose behalf Sri Krishna, the ideal conception of godhead, was represented as trying either to conclude an honourable peace or to challenge the enemy in a way which would create terror in their minds. It was for this reason the word Pancha-Grama, which Dhritarashtra offered and the Pandavas refused, was referred to as a nony or chastisement by Sri Krishna that the Pandavas were then in quite an altered position and had discovered themselves as heroes after Birata Parva to convey to them what is the real meaning of an unconquerable hero as referred to before in Daksha Samhita.

The institutes of Daksha explained — Attachment, illusion, distraction, shame, apprehension should be overcome by all means, and he who succeeds with ancillary attributes of mind and heart to discover the soul of man, is an unconquerable hero. He is not like a man who acquired forcibly the kingdoms of others and wanted to be styled a hero. What the institutes of Daksha explain and the annotator Nilkantha confirms, is that such a challenge was worthy of the hero, Yudhishthira, after

disclosing himself at the end of the promised time of exile passed in Birata Parva. The annotator has shown that the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata is universally held by wise-men to be the best of all the Parvas, as it taught that God takes the side of the just who, though quite capable of taking steps against the wrongs done by their enemies, do not do so to satisfy the enemy's desire and to fulfil the promise imposed upon them by wicked dice play.

Dice play was in vogue from Vedic times, King Nala lost his kingdom through it, but there was no mention of staking his wife Damayanti. The staking of a wife was never heard of at any time in any civilised or uncivilised country of the world. This was only an act of the bard to create a stirring dramatic effect on the audience and there is no historic truth behind it. The Epic Mahabharata was originally built upon a historical background, but was at last converted into an allegory of metaphysics. These historical personages are used as glorious examples to convert the general public into admirers and to convey to them the difficult implications of the spiritual and philosophical development of mind and soul. This is the real aim of the current Mahabharata from the invocation Sloka to the vast enlargement in the various divisions of the great Epic.

It will be interesting to mention here that in the Epic Ramayana there was no dice play and the exile of Rama took place on account of his wicked step-mother. The boon promised to the Queen Kakeyi could easily have been disregarded as the installation ceremony of Rama was announced before the asking of the boon, but Rama did not like to place his father in an awkward position. This was another instance of a son gladly undertaking the hardship of exile for the sake of his father's promise.

A life of exile in the woods is a sort of education to win the laurel of fame by putting into practice valour and skill at arms. The annotator Nilkantha has said so in his note. It is clearly mentioned that Yudhishthira visited the shrines and came across distinguished sages and heard from them experiences and lessons on how to become successful in life. The incident of the dragging of Draupadi at the dice play and the Durbasa incident in the Bana Parva were to show how devotion to God could foil the wicked in their attempts and nothing else. The discourse between Yudhishthira and Draupadi shows the spiritual culture of the couple.

In Bana Parva the good and evil companions of the company were discussed and in the Saunaka and Yudhishthira discourse the talk centred round the praise of Yoga over interested religion and virtue.

In Bhishma Parva it was shown that this Parva was merely made to show to this world the glory and power of an attached devotee like Bhishma, where Sri Krishna had to break his own promise in order that his devotee's words might come true, and it has no historical background whatsoever. In this Parva, Gita was included, which is strange, standing as it does after the queer position of Arjuna's advising Yudhishthira not to be afraid of Bhishma in Chapter XXI.

'O mighty armed hero O Dhyananjaya how shall we be able to fight with the Dhritarashtra's sons army when the grandfather himself commands it. Immovable and impenetrable is this Vruba formed according to the rules of the Shastras, by that chastiser of foes, Bhishma, of unfading glory. O chastiser of foes, we are doubtful of success. How can victory be ours in the face of this kuru army?'

O king, that chastiser of foes, Arjuna, thus spoke of your army to the son of Pritha, Yudhishthira who was in great grief. O king, hear how a small number of men, endued with every quality, can defeat a large army. O king, you are without malice. I shall therefore tell you of the means. The Rishi Narada as well as Bhishma and Drona know it. In the days of yore, at the battle between the celestials and the Danavas the Grandfather himself said (the foil wing) to Indra and the other celestials. 'They that are desirous of victory do not so much conquer by might and prowess as by truth, compassion, piety and virtue. Therefore, knowing the difference between piety and impiety and understanding what is meant by covetousness and having recourse to only exertion, fight without any arrogance for victory is certain to be there, where righteousness is.' O king, for this reason, know that victory is certain to be ours in this battle. Narada said, 'Victory is certainly there, where Sri Krishna is.' Victory is inherent to Sri Krishna. It follows Madhava (Krishna), victory is one of his attributes, so is humility. Govinda (Sri Krishna) possesses might which is infinite even in the midst of countless foes. He is without and beyond all pains. He is the most eternal Purusha. Victory is certainly there where Krishna is. (Bhishma Parva Chapter XXI, verses 3-14)

This is what Arjuna reads to Yudhishthira in the Mahabharata, and there is another version in Sanjaya's reading of the lecture of Sri Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield to cry down the heroism of the hero Arjuna and to speak in very high terms of the Kuru warriors, all killed by the God himself. Nor is this all. Sri Krishna told Arjuna to worship Durga and to fight Bhishma in the next chapter. All these speak of separate editions of the Mahabharata in different times.

The Indian Epic was first conceived and the Greeks copied it, which the learned Professor Max Muller admitted. Certain customs, manners, forms of gods and their worship, which were found to have been common among the Indians and Greeks and a striking resemblance between the Trojan War and the war of the Ramayana prove that Rome and Greece by their intercourse with India through trade and invasion realised the greatness of Indian culture and adopted it in the best way they could. It is well known that the ancient Hindu religion never admitted foreigners within it, and even now, it is patent even to casual observers.

In the Indian Epics no individual names are traced for their authorships, but they contain a colossal mass of didactic, lyrical and dramatic material full of mythological allusions and references representing the luxuriant growth of several ages. They betray the taste of pedantic editors and reciters to win applause from the learned as well as the illiterate audiences whom they addressed. They must, therefore, contain all kinds of things to suit the taste of different people. This is not a fanciful imagining without anything to bear it out. The constitution of public sacrifices with the different sorts of addresses for different people will serve to convince every reasonable man.

The current Epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata do not represent the age of Vyasa and Valmiki but a much later date. They were more artistic in design, ornate and dramatic in composition, with such divisions as made admission of extemporaneous foreign matter within them easy. They cannot, however, be compared with any other Epics of the world. The subsequent development in the Epics is distinguished with the age of advancing civilisation. All these are quite different from Western ideas and there is no trace of immigration into India from the West from the early days up to the Epic period.

The reciters of the Hindu Epics introduced Karna as their hero, greater than the Kshatriya Arjuna, making connection with the Royal family and disgracing it at the same time with the absurd story of conceiving a child when a mere girl not having attained the age of puberty. They were not satisfied with this. They made Karna such a great hero that Sri Krishna stooped so low as to offer him the kingdom, and Karna could not be bought off even by such an offer. He was always anxious to fight Arjuna. Poor men did not see that Karna was defeated several times before by Arjuna, at the Swayambara of Draupadi and at the fight on behalf of King Birata to recover his cows. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana were converted into the panegyric of the distinct lines of kings Solar and Lunar by the Sutas for selfish motives. Karna was made a hero of the Sutas.

"What harsh words, I said to the sons of Pandu, O Krishna, were for the gratification of the son of Dhritarastra and I am now struck with remorse for that misdeed."

"When you will see me, O Krishna, slain by Savyasachi, then will the Pnvas chita (the second part of the ceremonies) commence, O Janardana."

"When the sons of Pandu will drink the blood of Dussashana, repeatedly making loud roars, then will the drinking of the Soma juice of the sacrifice have been finished."

"When Drona and Bhishma will be overthrown by the two Princes of Panchala, then will the ceremonies connected with the sacrifice of the son of Dhritarastra be brought to an end, O Janardana."



"When Bhimasena of great strength will be the slayer of Durjodhana then will the ceremonies be finished

"When the daughters in law and the grand daughters in law (wives of grandsons) of Dhritarashtra will assemble together being deprived of their protectors, their sons and their husbands O Keshava, weeping loudly with Gandhari in the field of battle frequented by dogs and vultures and other carnivorous animals then will the final bath in connection with the sacrifice have taken place, O Janardana

"Do not let the best of the Kshatriyas who are old in learning and old in age meet with a useless death on account of your doings O slayer of Madhu

"The entire race of Kshatriyas will meet with death by weapons in Kurukshetra, the holiest spot in all the world O Keshava O son of lotus eyes manage things in such a way in this case that we may gain our end—that united together the Kshatriyas go to Heaven, O you of the Vrishni race

"So long as mountains and lakes will exist, O Janardana so long will the fame of this event last—that is for ever

"The Brahmanas will tell the world of the great battle of Mahabharata The wealth of Kshatriyas O you of Vrishni race is what they win in the field of battle

"Bring here the son of Kunti for me to fight O Keshava for ever keeping this conversation secret O Chastiser of enemies \*

The Greeks were great admirers of India and followed Indians in every respect Solon ordered first that the rhapsodists should keep closely to the traditional text of the poem at their public recitals and Pisistratus appointed a committee of several poets to collect the scattered lays and revise the text found in extant copies or in the oral traditions of the rhapsodists Thus, in course of time, the original texts underwent many arbitrary alterations at their hands, chiefly to suit the tastes of the different ages in order to make the recital popular and lucrative The original compositions of Vyasa and Valmiki were disfigured, lost, and altered, and in this way the Indian Epics grew in size incongruous and out of order both in sequence of time and reasoning

The Greek Epic writer of note belonged to 640 B C and it is held that elegaic and iambic poetry like the Epic owed its origin to Ionian Colonies in Asia Minor Poetry and prose first developed among the Ionians in the era of seven sages in the beginning of the sixth century B C Aesop published his fables and Pherecydes of Syros composed philosophical prose writing In the fifth century B C the philosophy of the Ionian School was actually founded and Pythagoras, who established his philosophy in Magna Graccia, died in 504 B C Herodotus, the father of history, and Hippocrates, the founder of medical science, died in 424 B C and 377 B C respectively. Athens won the leading position from the time of Solon, who died in 399 B C It is well-known that the early Greek Chronicler, Hecataur, travelled widely in Europe, Asia and Egypt and he was born in 550 B C He gave his countrymen good counsel and succeeded in

\* The Mahabharata Parva, Chapter 64, verses 45-57

obtaining some alleviation of the hard measures adopted by the Persians at the time of the Ionian revolt.

The great resemblance of the mere sequence of things in the progress of civilisation between Grecian and Indian histories is often mistaken as meaning that one was copied from the other, but the historian of man does not find any such thing between the two in the habits, manners and customs of the Hindus. There was no trace of Hetaerism or of promiscuous relationship between the sexes. The family and not the tribe was the unit of society. The father or the preceptor was the head of the family or the maker of the spiritual life in the re-birth of a Gotra. The families were not reckoned on the mothers' sides and inheritance did not descend by the female line.

The Chronicle of Kish gives the origin of the famous Sargon I, of Akkad, in the same way as that of Suta Karna, who was held to be the crowned King of Anga by Durjodhana.

"According to the Chronicle of Kish, the next ruler of Sumer and Akkad after Lugal zaggisi was the famous Sargon I. It would appear that he was an adventurer or usurper and that he owed his throne indirectly to Lugal zaggisi, who had dethroned the ruler of Akkad. Later traditions, which have been partly confirmed by contemporary inscriptions, agree that Sargon was of humble birth. In the previous chapter reference was made to the Tammuz like myth attached to his memory. His mother was a vestal virgin dedicated to the sun god, Shamash, and his father an unknown stranger from the mountains—a suggestion of immediate Semitic affinities. Perhaps Sargon owed his rise to power to the assistance received by bands of settlers from the land of the Amorites, which Lugal zaggisi had invaded. According to the legend, Sargon's birth was concealed. He was placed in a vessel which was committed to the river. Brought up by a commoner, he lived in obscurity until the Semitic goddess, Ishtar, gave him her aid. A similar myth was attached in India to the memory of Karna, the Hero of that great Sanskrit Epic the Mahabharata."

The close similarity between the legend of Suta Karna of the Mahabharata, and the story of King Sargon is significant and suggestive of extraneous influence. In the table of contents of the first edition of the Mahabharata Karna's name is not mentioned, and it is likely that the fame of King Sargon having reached India, the story of Sargon was later on foisted upon the Mahabharata in the guise of the mythical Karna. Further, Sargon is a Jewish name and it might have been that Jews were at first inhabitants of India, and subsequently spread to all parts of the world for trade. The Sutas and Sargons might be identical. The Sutas were the chroniclers of the kings and when, by the extirpation of the kings (Kshatriyas) by Parasurama, the occupation of the Sutas in India was gone, they betook themselves for trade to foreign countries and came to be designated Jews, many of whose

\* Professor Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Babylonia and Assyria," pages 125-126.

customs and religious practices closely resemble those of the ancient Hindus, e.g., the custom of offering oblations to the departed ancestors, that of observing general mourning and uncleanness for one year after death of parents, that of performing the Holi festival, that of burning a lamp for some days in the room where a death occurs, and so on

Sutas meant bards, who originally lived in Bengal where the Puranas were caste. Professor Pargiter is of the same opinion —

"The Suta mentioned here is not the caste that was described as the offspring of a Kshatriya father and Brahman mother, that was a later application of the term. This Suta was a bard like the Magadha, and the origin of both is placed in the time of a primal king Prithu, son of Vena. It is explained by a fable which says the first Suta and Magadha came into existence at his sacrifice, and gives a fanciful explanation of the names. What is noteworthy is that the story says Prithu assigned the Anupura Suta country to the Sutas and Magadha to the Magadhas, and this discloses that the Magadhas were really inhabitants of Magadha and the Sutas inhabitants of the Anupura country which appears to mean Bengal here, or of the Suta country the district east of Magadha.\* The Sutas had from remote times preserved the genealogies of gods, rishis and kings and traditions and ballads about celebrated men, that is, exactly the material-tales-songs and an index — out of which the Purana was constructed. Whether or not Vyasa composed the original Purana or superintended its compilation, is immaterial for the present purpose. What is important is that there was abundant tradition of various kinds which could and would naturally have been used in its construction and of the very kinds that went to its construction. The ancient tales were topics of real interest to kings, people and rishis, as both the Epics and the Puranas by their very structure proclaim, and they were also matters to which men of intelligence gave their attention. Allusions in the Veda itself show the same. It would be quite natural that after the religious hymns were formed into the Veda the ancient secular tales and lore should have been collected in a Purana. What the next development of the Purana was is described in the Brahmanda and Vayu and similarly though less fully in the Vishnu. Romaharsana made that Purana Samhita into six versions and taught them to his six disciples, Atreya Sumati Kashyapa Kartavyana Bharadvaja Anandakumar Vasistha Mitrayu, Sivarni and Samapavana and made three separate Samhitas which were called by their names. Romaharsana's Samhita and those three were the 'root compositions' (Mulasamhita). They consisted of four divisions (pada) and were to the same effect but differed in their diction. All except Samapavana's contained 4000 verses. Those versions do not exist now, still some of those persons, besides Romaharsana, appear as inquirers or narrators in some of the Puranas and also in the Mahabharata.†

The Vayu, Brahmanda and Vishnu Puranas say —

"Krishna Draupayana divided the single Veda into four and arranged them, and so was called Vyasa. He entrusted them to his four disciples, one to each namely Paila Vaisampayana Jaimini and Sumanta. Then with tales, anecdotes, songs and lore that had come down from the sages he compiled a Purana and taught it and the Itihasa to his fifth disciple, the Suta Romaharsana or Lomaharsana.‡

There is a very close connection between the Drama and the Veda,<sup>1</sup> with its religion and worship. Bharata, an old sage, the father of the

\*Professor Pargiter's 'Ancient Historical Tradition,' page 16

† Professor Pargiter's 'Ancient Historical Tradition,' pages 22-23

‡ Professor Pargiter's 'Ancient Historical Tradition,' page 21

Ancient Indian Natyasastra, occupies a place in the growth of dramatic theory analogous to that of Panini in Vedic Grammar. Drama was developed in an age of advanced, civilised and cultured society, able to understand the implications of the plays. Epic literature discloses a new form of theme designed to represent the old traditions in vivid pictures of social, moral and spiritual giants, who could represent the ideals of the time against their despised rivals. It is said Brahma first conceived the idea of transferring to earth the celestial instructions of the Vedas in such a way as to be interesting and pleasing entertainment for the general public irrespective of caste, creed or colour, so that the country and the nation as a whole might be educated, benefitted and entrusted with the propagation of a peaceful race and a powerful religion.

Drama was first begun on a special occasion—the victory over the Asuras by the Devas, headed by Indra. Visvakarma, the great architect of heaven, built a stage and the sage Bharata and the divine nymph Urvashi sought the help of the great God Siva, goddess Parvati and their son, Ganesh, patron of literature and remover of obstacles. Siva contributed to it the “Tandava” dance, Parvati the dramatic movements of face and body called Lasya, and Vishnu took the active parts of four dramatic styles, so very essential for the effectiveness of the play. Ganesh was the reviser of Vyasa’s composition of the Bharata Samhita of 8800 verses. This is what is recorded in the table of contents of the Mahabharata.

In Rama’s case, the influence of the Epic on the Drama seems to have been in its full development.\* The origin of the Drama and dramatic performance are connected with the Vedic performances and hymns and the victory of the Devas over the Asuras. The essential aim of Bharata’s drama was to secure the worship of the Devas, not by hymns—very difficult and costly affairs—in the sacrifices, but by actual personifications of the great fight between Britta and Indra, when Indra won and seized the banner of Jarpara, a reed of five knots painted white, blue, black, yellow, red and a mixture of hues. The people joining the entertainment paid reverence to Indra’s banner and to the world guardians (Dikpals)†.

The table of contents of the Epic clearly says that the Bharata Samhita begins either with the account of King Uparichara or with the Astik

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\*Bhababhuti’s Uttaramcharita is well appreciated by Eastern and Western scholars and his debt to the Epic is acknowledged.

†The Mahabharata of Vyasa actually begins with the Indra and Narayana worship by Uparichara Basuhoma and praise to the Dikpalas by Vyasa in the hymn of Sabitri (Pide Annusasana Parva, 150 Chapter).

Parva or with Sambhab Parva The beginning of King Uparichara is in the Adi Parva, Chapter LXIII, confirmed in the Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXXVIII The Yajñavalkya edition of the Mahabharata is referred to in Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXIX, which begins with Astik Parva, and the Narayana edition begins with Sayambhuba Manu with the Sambhab Parva, and the Vaisampayan edition begins in the Adi Parva, Chapter LX, which also begins with King Uparichara from Chapter LXIII, Adi Parva

# EPIC HISTORY AND CIVILISATION.

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The earliest records of the Indo-Aryans can only be found in the Vedas, but for which very little would have been known of that age, and of the ancient Aryans. This has been admitted by all the learned men of the world. The Rîg Veda is held to be the oldest, and the trunk from which all the Vedas grew or were divided.

India was the birthplace of the Vedas and the first home of civilisation and religion. The language in which the Vedas were written and sung was abstruse and terse, if not mystic. It required a full twelve years' training to enable students to understand and read them properly.

The royal sacrifices became useful institutions of vocational training in which students learnt the Vedas. In Vedic sacrifices large numbers of animals were sacrificed and the great sages Vasistha and Kapila were the first protestants who stood against the inhumanity of such sacrifices and sternly set their faces against them. The Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata were first conceived by the great sages to carry on the Vedic sacrifices, replacing animal sacrifices with great concentration of mind to realise the true essence of the Vedic religion. Sacrifices were soon impressed with the character of educational institutions of great public utility, and were adjuncts to the advancement of civilisation and the material prosperity of the country.

In the long term sacrifices the whole people of a country and adjacent places were entertained with the contents of the Indian Epics, which open with the plans of God's wisdom in creation, His unselfish love and due provisions of mercy to created beings. The ardour of natural affection shines forth in the material world in mother and child. The infant unmask the true spirit of love in the bosom of his family, and in strangers without any fear of interruption or intrusion. The home, where the infant grows, becomes the centre of attraction. India was such a home of the Aryans.

By their great sacrifices they reclaimed forests, extended human habitation over uninhabitable regions by drawing together a large concourse of people to the scene of the sacrifices, by excavating rivers, by draining away filth and refuse either by using them as fuel, or throwing them in the water, or covering them with earth as manure for cultivation, by utilising the large number of cattle in ploughing the fields and drawing water from wells, instead of destroying them in the burning flames.

of the sacrificial fire and, last though not least, the young students, impressed with the majestic sacrifices, learnt with avidity the great recitations of Vedic formulae and ceremonies from the expert performers from day to day.

The great advancement of the present age in knowledge makes it possible to discover the growth of civilisation in India from the Vedic sacrifices, their great ministers and the kings who performed them. There is no pleasure so charming and transporting as to catch the first glimpse of the spot where the first great creation of God took place. The scientific nations of the world believe in the deluge of the world, and the Hindus do the same. The succession of time is only a stream leading to Eternity and, what reason leads one to conclude from enquiries, researches and experiments properly conducted, becomes scientific truth.

There are evidences of Nature in the domain of research. Nature has made one world and Art another, but they are not at variance. Art is, after all, nothing but the perfection of Nature. The heart is moved equally by Nature and Art. The deductions of reason are indeed gratifying to the intellect in its endeavours to comprehend the manner in which everything was first made and displayed, and the order in which the various objects of creation, viz., ocean, mountain, desert, river, lake, waterfall, or water, earth, wind, fire and sky, came into being. There is nothing so charming as the knowledge of literature which makes one realise the infinity and majesty of the author of Nature. Nature is the kindest mother, supplying every creature, insect and plant with what is indispensably necessary for the support of life.

It is not the Vedas but the spirit of God which rescued them from the obscurity of ignorance and saved them from the hands of the Asuras by the revelation of the guardian angel of Nature in the hurling of thunder, burning of wood with wild fire, blowing the peaks of mountains to earth, or bringing out burning lava from the bed of the earth. Art has nothing to do with all these, and science failed to discover many things about them. Nature's voice was reflected in the emotional instinct of man, in the Vedic hymn makers by their meek submission of solemn and sincere love, trying to propitiate the supernatural or superhuman powers.

In Epic literature the first attempt was made to decipher the plan and field of the growth of civilisation and its spread. The fall of kings, the rage of nations and the crash of states could not be the theme of such early literature of India. There is a great pleasure in the effort and satisfaction will always increase with its success, with which name, of 'Jaya,' or success, the Epics of India are titled and named.

The spiritual history of the great Epic is inter-related with the material progress of India. Sacrifices served the purpose of great educational, agricultural, irrigation and reclamation works—institutions of very great importance for the growth of the country and the nation—through the instrumentality of the ancient sages. This ultimately gave rise to a sort of hagiarchy in India. There are some great examples of human art in the world which have received the name of Wonders of the World. The famous Pyramid, the quarry of Egypt, is one of them. India is the epitome of the world. The Indian Epics describe giants and prodigies of a nation whose deeds can be regarded as Wonders of the World.

Sixty thousand subjects of King Sagar worked like his obedient and devoted children in excavating the sea south of Bengal, and fathered the name of the sea as "Sagara" in Sanskrit, the mother of all languages. The island Sagara at the meeting place of the Ganges and the sea, where the famous sage Kapila released the humble labourers from the toils of earthly life became a sacred shrine. It was this hagiarchy which compelled Sagara's descendant Bhagiratha to undertake very extensive excavation, in spite of the great protests of the royal Vedic sage Jahuhu, only to propitiate the greatest of all sages Kapila by joining the Ganges with the sea near Kapila's hermitage in Bengal to redeem the great work of Sagara's children over a great length of time.

The halbertier Brahmin warrior Parasurama helped very greatly by force of arms and skill to establish this hagiarchy in India. He too, like Bhagirata, had widened and extended the river Brahmaputra. His crusades against the Kshatriyas drove many Kshatriya kings, queens and princes to take refuge on the banks of the Ganges in Bengal. Saptagrama was the famous place of the seven sages near the well-known shrine of Tribeni, where the three rivers Ganges, Jumna and Saraswati meet. Naturally these Kshatriya princes and kings bore a deep resentment against this hagiarchy, and were very reluctant to be subservient to the priestly behests and to performances of Vedic sacrifices. The priestly law givers like Manu, in retaliation, branded them with inferiority and banned Bengal as a place outside Aryavarta. The kings of Bengal fought against the Pandavas and it is said to be a place "shunned by the Pandavas".

The origin of the name of Bengal is said to have been connected with the human art of constructing an embankment wall around it to prevent its being washed away by flood. \* Banga was the name of the king of that place and "al" meant a boundary ridge. The formation

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\* Ayen Akbari



of the delta of Bengal was perhaps referred to in the great Epic as the building of so many islands, with which the Epic history of nations is concerned. Ablutions at the sacred estuary of the Ganges and of the Brahmaputra are still considered as greatly sanctifying, and every year large numbers of religious pilgrims go there.

The great Epic describes that King Bali's five sons were the kings of separate divisions of Bali's kingdom, which received their names Anga, Banga, Kahuga, Pundra and Suhma. Bengal from the very early days of the Vedic period reached the highwater-mark of learning, philosophy, religion and good manners. When Dhritarastra was amongst the Kshatriya kings of India, Dirghatama was among the sages, *i.e.*, described as blind. Pradivashi, wife of Dirghatama, instructed her sons to throw her husband, bound head and feet, into the Ganges so that he might float down to Bengal and learn good manners there. Dirghatama was rescued by King Bali\* and gave birth to the famous Vedic scholars Kakshivatis from the wombs of the maid-servants of the Queen of Bali.

If Bengal was not a great seat of Vedic learning, if it was not the birthplace of it, even the despised 'Dasiputras' (sons of maid servants), could not have been such great Vedic scholars of the day. Nor is this all. The great Epic begins with the sacrifices of King Uparichar of Magadha in the old province of Bengal, and Nahusa's sacrifice with veiled tirades against animal sacrifice. Kashyapa banished the human sacrificer, Parasurama, from the civilised countries of India and is said to have repatriated the Kshatriya refugees. Kashyapa's sons are said to be the Nagas, which in all probability does not mean the race of reptiles or snakes, but that of the people called the Nagas, still living in Chhota Nagpur in the old provinces of Bengal where they migrated.

The life and deeds of Parasurama mark a transitional stage in the history of Aryan religious development. It is rather strange that he is identified with one of the Avatars of Vishnu, but is described in the Ramayana as a follower of Siva, who fought with Rama when he had heard of his breaking of Haradhan (or the bow of Siva) to win his bride Sita at King Janaka's palace. Rama is said to be an incarnation of Narayana and his breaking of Siva's bow symbolised the decadence of the Pasupat cult of worship, and Parasurama's subsequent signal defeat and disgrace at the hands of Rama symbolised the definite triumph and ascendancy of the Narayana cult of worship over the Pasupat cult. This is described in the great Daksha Yajna (sacrifice) in the great Epic.

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\* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter 103.

Kapila typifies the Bengal school of nonconformists and dissenters from the old school of animal sacrifices. Thus the great Epic describes when Kapila protested against the animal sacrifice of King Nihusa. Pious piety and self-sufficiency are sobered down by the acquisition of real knowledge. Thus the great Epic demonstrates in the fall of Parasurama and Nihusa, and they have been the buoys in the vast ocean of life to warn people of the danger. In the protestantism against the old system of sacrifice it is only natural that the remodelling and re-creation occurred to the place of its original birth and growth. Kapila took the lead in this and he represented Bengal.

Every intelligent and cultured man has a right to be heard, but the effect of the poison to become the venom of the heart, it becomes pre-destined. The turbulent influence produced by prejudices and the spirit of opposing rank and in exhaustion of the quivers of irony, comes to the end of the contending parties. The Indian Epic of a later age does not intend and serve as great light houses of warning to posterity. The institution of Vedic sacrifices, with the march of the times, had passed through various vicissitudes. They assumed gigantic proportions. Knowing that superstition is the religion of habit, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas connected everything with a hidden meaning, and made a record of religious merit or demerit for their offspring as a legacy. The great peculiarity of the Indo-Aryan civilization is that its gradual development and advance has been facilitated by the observance and continuance of all works of public utility by giving them a religious character and sanction. It was a consequence and the outcome of partisanship descended to such a level of utter animosity to wound personalities that the dispute had no option left but to leave home and go to the battlefield to decide their quarrel through war and kill. It was thus that the whole scene of the great Epic became at last converted into the great religion of truth with Sri Krishna at its head.

Resolution takes place with a sudden impulse given to the mind, without allowing knowledge time to ripen into principle. This was the state of India when the great battle of Kurukshetra took place. The field is like a vast ocean in a tempest, where human beings big or small, like ship, drifted away from their anchors of reason and became the sport of circumstance and foundered in the deep bed of the ocean of time. It is indeed the most pitiable sight and illustrates to the world the great lesson that passions are the signs of the soul and the children of Nature. To be without them is worse than birds and beasts, and every man should remember that the Omnipotent Father blessed

men and women with reason and conscience to use the passions by keeping them under control

The discovery of the skeleton of a man of mighty stature like that of Bhuma Kartaviryarjun, demon-like Kunibhakarna or Ravana, may give rise to a conclusion that men in ancient times were giants, but it finds very little credence in the present age. Many of the sports and pastimes, food and drink, habit and custom of the ancients might have been responsible for such wonderful growths. The bones show that vultures did not fall upon them or the earth could not decompose them as they were sacred. There are deep meanings to the unusual stories of the birth of the Epic heroes, to their names as well as their pictures as giants of strength and intellect. Bichitravirya was the name of the father of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Bidura. The name Bichitravirya itself was selected to imply more the marked diversity of his progeny than anything else. It is said that the mother of Dhritarashtra, at the sight of the procreator sage, closed her eyes out of vanity and hatred and so the issue became blind, that Pandu's mother could not bear the effulgence of the Brahmana sage and her issue became frightened and retired and so the issue became yellow complexioned, that the slave girl was all reverence to the sage, so her issue Bidura became Brahminical.

That Kunti's and Madri's relations with the gods above were fruitful and those with their human husband Pandu were not so, symbolise that the Pandavas were the issues of divine love and not of carnal passion. The picture of carnal love is depicted in the death of Pandu in the arms of Madri, and Madri ascending the funeral pyre of her dead husband not for religious practice, but to satisfy her unsatisfied love and passion in the next world as the great Epic describes. When man or woman creates wants by luxury and passion such deaths stare in the face those who indulge in them. The traditional pictures of social life in the heroic age and nothing else are reflected in these characters.

The civilisation of Ancient India is also reflected in the mythology of the Hindus as well as in their popular and well-known customs and manners. The first incarnation of God Vishnu was the fish, indicating that men in the earliest time lived by eating the most easily procurable food, *i.e.*, fish. The next incarnations of tortoise and boar indicate that with the progress of civilisation men betook themselves to these animal foods, which are seen in plenty in the rivers and jungles of Bengal. Besides, the idea found in the Rig Veda that man's soul goes to the tree and to water is still believed by the

**Sonthals of Bengal** The rivers of the Punjab or the United Provinces are not like those of Bengal.

The well-known story of the churning of the sea and the rising of the goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi, is very significant. The worship of the goddess Lakshmi is connected with the corn-growing of Bengal. The Sanskrit word *Arya* and the incarnation of Vishnu Valaram are connected with the plough ("a"). The birth of the great Epic heroine Sita is also connected with it. From all these it is evident that the Aryans were agricultural people and it would naturally connect the Aryan habitation to a place on the plains near sea and river with rich fertile soil and abundance of water for irrigation and rain. The deity of prosperity, Lakshmi, is worshipped in every Hindu home periodically every year in Bengal only.

Bengal is famous for feeding one hundred thousand Brahmanas at Vedic Sradh ceremonies, as would appear from the records of the Calcutta High Court, and for spending millions of rupees for the performance of the funeral obsequies of parents. From the days of the most ancient civilisation, the most popular and sacred method of according honour and welcome to a guest has been by offering him water, etc., called *padya* and *arghya*, and that of offering blessing with corn and green grass. The origin of this custom would again point to a country which was rich in green verdure all the year round and in a superabundance of water and corn. There is no part of India which would answer the description better than Bengal.

The whole of India except the Punjab was known by the name of *Gour* in Bengal, and the *Gour* method of literary composition is mentioned in old Sanskrit literature. The *Gour* Brahmanas were engaged in the snake sacrifice of *Janmejaya*. The mythological mountains of *Mandar*, used as the spindle or the churning staff of the sea, is in old Bengal. In trade and commerce as well as in manufacture of celebrated goods which formed the articles of oversea trade with the outside world, Bengal stood foremost. From the earliest time Bengal was famous for building boats and sea-going vessels. European traders before the days of Alexander's expedition came in their vessels to *Satgaon* of Bengal. It was from Bengal that the first expedition to Ceylon and its conquest by *Bijoy Sidha*, son of *King Singhabahu* of Bengal, took place.

The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* contain interesting relationship between the well-known kings like *Dasaratha* and *Durjodhana* as friends and allies. Bengal is closely connected with the political, historical and religious history of India.

There are good grounds for concluding that Bengal and adjacent parts was the seat of early civilisation in India. Aryyalaya, the abode of Vishnu, is the name of Murrial in the District of Rajshahi. This was the commercial mart where the East India Company had an established factory for the purchase of silk and cotton goods \* Saugor Island is the most ancient shrine of Kapila, where the sons of King Sagara were cursed and destroyed and the custom of infanticide continued up to the time of the British occupation † There is a mention of Ravana's falling into a swoon at meeting Kapila Deva in the Ramayana and there is an island of Rahmabad in the District of Backergunge and the British gun is the famous sound whose cause has not as yet been discovered. Ravana was connected with the tradition of the great Siva at Budyarth and the river Karmanasha ‡ At Sahebgunge, in the District of Purnea, there is a Hindu temple dedicated to the gigantic Hanuman, devotee of Rama Chandra § The king Janaka, the celebrated father of Sita, lived on the Tirhoot Tivabhuati, whose dialect is called Maithili and whose kingdom lay by the border or the Nepalese kingdom. The river Gunduck owes its origin to Tibet of Dhawala-giri mountain peak where the Salgrama Silas are found, which are worshipped by the Hindus. A town in the Tirhoot district is called Pursumah (Parasu Rama) 90 miles North East of Patna ¶

There is an island Vamani at the confluence of the Ganges and Brahmaputra \*\* as well as Isle of the Moon (Somadwipa) at the confluence commonly known as Sundeeep Isle †† There is a remarkable hot spring which is also called Seta Kund and the famous Siva ChandraSekhara in Chittagong. It is significant that Kookies are a stout, muscular people with flat nose, broad round face, small eyes, all hunters and warriors with bows, arrows, clubs, spears and dows under whose care Sita was left when Rama and Lakshmana went out in search of the golden stag and Ravana found the convenient opportunity to steal Sita. Sita Coundu at Chittagong is perhaps the spot where she was seized by force and transferred to a ship to carry her to Ceylon. It was by sea Sita was carried, which baffled Rama and Lakshmana to trace the culprit. The savage people felt aggrieved at Ravana's conduct and made common cause against the great tyrant Ravana to

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\* *I*de Hamilton's 'Geographical, Statistical, and Historical description of Hindoosthan', Volume I, page 109

† *I*bid p 128

‡ *I*bid p 134

§ *I*bid p 238

¶ *I*bid p 273

\*\* *I*bid p 176

†† *I*bid p 175

recover Sita This can be the only cause of Rama's alliance with them and not what the poets' imagination might have blessed the plot with, the cruel murder of Bali. The great warrior Rama must have trained these savages, who were described by the poets as monkeys, etc., to win the battle against so powerful an enemy and did not seek the help of his brothers Bharata and Satrugna and the royal army If Sita was carried by land to trace her destination would not have been difficult

The history of Ceylon lingers in the ancient tradition of Rama and Ravana, and in connection with Prince Wijaya of Jambu Dwipa

"The proper name of this island is Singhal, from which the term Ceylon is probably derived, by the Hindus on the Continent it is named Lanca, and by the Mahomedans Serindib It is also frequently named Taprobane, a name which perhaps originates from Tapoo Ravana, or the island of Ravana a demon and sovereign in the remote times of Hindu antiquity The strange mythological poem, named the Ramayana, narrates the conquest of Ceylon and destruction of Ravana by Rama, king of Oudh, assisted by an army of gigantic monkeys, which appears to indicate an existing connection between this island and the northern quarters of Hindostan The first meridian of the Hindus passes through the city of Oojein in Malwah, of which we know the position, but as, according to that projection Lanca falls to the west of the present island, the Hindus are of opinion that Ceylon had formerly a much greater extent, and appearances between it and the Maldives tend to justify the belief The name of the river Mahavally Gunga has probably originated from Bali, a hero famous in Hindu romance, from whom the celebrated ruins at Mahavalipuram on the coast of Coromandel are also designated According to Ceylonese tradition, Prince Wijaya, the oldest son of the Emperor Singha Bahu (lion-armed), who reigned over the kingdom of Lala in Jambhu Dwipa (India), having embarked from the city of Singhapur, his father's capital, accompanied by 700 martial adherents, landed in Ceylon on a Tuesday, at the time of full moon, in the month of May, 543 years before the Christian era, and was appointed king of the island by Buddha, who had for that purpose transported himself to it through the air On his arrival he found the country much infested by devils, who it appears rendezvoused in a large forest of Nha trees whence Buddha compelled them to evacuate, and remove to an island named Giridiwa, which he had summoned for their reception from Jambhu Dwipa, and this being accomplished, he remanded the island with its cargo back to its original position Prior to this event Ceylon was destitute of human occupants, Buddha therefore preached to the demigods who had assembled round him, and having established the ordinances of his religion, and rendered Ceylon a fit habitation for human beings, he returned to Jambhu Dwipa In this manner, by the instrumentality of Buddha, and the assistance of the inferior deities Prince Wijaya, descended from the family of the sun, was the first king who reigned over Ceylon, which he continued to do for the period of 8 years \*\*

There is a place called Sittivacca about 30 miles from Colombo full of precious stone mines, which perhaps owes its name to Sita.

"Sittivacca (or Situaque) —A small town in the interior of Ceylon, and formerly noted for being the chief scene of intercourse, both friendly and hostile, between the

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\*Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindusthan and the Adjacent Countries" Vol 11, pages 502-503

Candiana and their European neighbours. It was then a boundary town, and stands on a large branch of the Malwaddy river, which here makes a great sweep."

Dondra-head and Adam's Bridge are important reminiscences of the Ramayana.

"Manaar (Gulf of)—This gulf separates Ceylon from the Southern Carnatic. Although too shallow to admit vessels of a large size the depth of water is sufficient for sloops, dories and other small craft which convey goods by this passage to and from the continent to Colombo instead of taking the outward circuitous passage, and rounding the island by Dondra head. The ridge of sand banks named Adam's Bridge present a great obstruction and vessels are frequently obliged to lighten at Manaar before they can pass. This is called the inner or Palk's passage, from a Dutchman of that name who first attempted it."

"Dondra head—The southernmost extremity of the island of Ceylon near to which are still to be seen the ruins of what apparently has been a magnificent Hindu temple."†

The names of Mathura and Neel-Gunga with the town and the river are important, and the town of that name connected with the exploits of Sri Krishna and the river Gunga connected with the hero of the Mahabharata, like Bali is an important link in the Epic poetic imagination of a later day. That Ravana originally was a native of Tibet can be traced from the name of the lake of his name.

"Ravana's Hrad (or Roodh) Lake—This lake is within a short distance west of Manasarovara, probably not more than ten miles, but being less holy it has not been examined with the same attention. Ravan Hrad, by native travellers, was always represented as surrounding and insulating some large portions of rock, a little detached from the great Himachl. The name is derived from Ravana a celebrated demon, the antagonist of the demigods and legitimate sovereign of Ceylon, from whence he was expelled by the great Parasu Rama, assisted by the sage counsels of his gigantic prime minister, the monkey Hanuman — (Moorcroft etc., etc.)"§

Undes is the name of a tract of country west of Lake Ravana between Kailas and Himalaya.

"Undo: (Urna Desa)—This is the general name of the tract of country situated between the Kailas and Himalaya ridges of mountains west of Lake Ravan's Hrad (or Roodh), and intersected by the course of the Sutlege river, which issuing from that lake flows to the north west"‡

\* Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindusthan and the Adjacent Countries" Vol II, page 515

† Ibid Vol II, page 516

‡ Ibid Vol II, page 521,

§ Ibid Vol, II page 591/92

‡ Ibid. Vol. II, page 593

The worshipping of the deities Durga, Kālī, Ganesha, Kartikeya and visiting shrines like Gaya, Jagarnath, Saugor, Benares, Allahabad, are respected in Tibet

Adultery was not a crime in Tibet. Dancing is a favourite amusement and was performed by people of all ranks and degrees, but there are no professional dancers amongst the Tibetians. The choice of the wife is the exclusive privilege of the elder brother—one female associating with all the brothers of the family without any restriction of age or numbers. With respect to matrimony one male exercises an uncontrolled despotism over many females. A reference is found to be made to Nepal about Bhimasena, the mighty Pandava of the great Epic

"The numerous valleys among the prodigious mountains of which Nepal in its extended sense consists, are inhabited by various tribes, that differ very much in language and considerably in customs. All that have any pretensions to be considered aboriginal, like their neighbours of Bhottan to the east, are by their features clearly marked as belonging to the Tartar or Chinese race of men, and have no sort of resemblance to the Hindus. The time when the Hindus penetrated into these regions is very uncertain. Bhim Sen, the son of Pandoo, is said to have entered them, and probably was the first who introduced any sort of improvement. He still continues to be a favourite object of veneration with the rude tribes, both on the mountains and in their vicinity. Probably at no great distance from the time of that prince, and about the commencement of our era, Sakya, the last great teacher of the Buddhists passed through the country, and settled at Lassa where he is supposed still to animate the mortal portion of the Grand Lama" \*

Jara Rakshasi and Kirata, about whom important references are made with the birth and name of Jarasandha and Arjuna's fight, are the aboriginal race names of Nepal

"Kirants (Kiratas) —East from the territory of Nepal Proper, the mountains are chiefly occupied by a tribe named Kirat or Kichak, who at a period of remote antiquity appear to have made conquests in the plains of Camroop and Matsya, which now compose the Bengal districts of Rungpur and Dinagepur. These Kirats are also frequently mentioned in Hindu legend as occupying the country between Nepal and Madra, the ancient denomination in Brahminical writings of the country we call Bhutan †"

Gandhara appears among the countries of India in Sanskrit literature from the Upanishadic period and its inhabitants are, no doubt, Gandharbhas famous for their health, beauty and artistic taste and occupation. The Gandharva kings fought with the Bharata kings and the most notable incident was the mention of a fight between king Chitrangada, son of Santanu and step-brother of Bhishma, and a Gandharva king, who won the battle and killed his adversary. The said king retired perhaps when he heard of the name and fame of Bhishma.

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\* Walter Hamilton's 'Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindustan' page 668, Vol II

† Ibid. page 712 Vol II,



It proves the antiquity of the kingdom of the Bharatas and the Gandharvas beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The princess Gandhari \* was the queen of the blind king Dhritarashtra and her piety and charity made her one of the heroines of the Bharata Samhita, and the son of Vedavyasa, Sukra, recited the book to the Gandharvas. There is another significant fact that the happy valley of Kashmir is full of ancient remains of many huge buildings, parts of palaces and temples ascribed to the Pandavas. They are the standing memories of the great heroes who were accepted as incarnations of the attributes of virtue and God, and these real personalities cannot be brushed aside as mythological beings as has usually been done.

The seven sages belonging to a cycle of time called Manvantara are not fixed chronologically in the two Epics, and the Puranas and the genealogies given in them, and the names of descendants of sages and kings hardly reconcile with one another. The Manvantaras, or the cycles of time with which the early history of India is mysteriously wound up, and the great ages are so confusing that no useful purpose will be served by vainly trying to fix them in their definite and proper chronological sequence. Allegory and mythology also play a large part in the Epics, and the Puranas. The extravagance of Indian mythology and the fanciful popular etymologies and allegories, constitute a great impediment to the resuscitation of clear chronological data and the relative importance and bearing of facts embedded in the endless stories of the Epics and Puranas.

Close study of the two Epics and Puranas will enable any reasonable student to arrive at the conclusion that the division of history into four Yugas is a mere fiction, invented to obscure their inter-relation. In the circumstances, the only course left open to find out the truth is to follow the reasonable method of fixing it from discourses between persons, with which the Mahabharata is full, and well-known incidents recited in the Epics and the Puranas, rather than to follow the incorrect genealogical tables or the Gotra schemes, some of which appear to be fanciful. The Bharata Samhita had its school of philosophy and morals. The many different editions of the Mahabharata which were grafted on the original theme, *viz*, the Bharata Samhita, have their origin in a different school of philosophy with its distinctive outlook on morality, religion and theology.

Hence the different strata of the Mahabharata have been loosely superimposed one upon another. The philosophical schools on which

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\* The Gandharis are mentioned in Rig and Atharva Vedas, and Gandhara country is known in Ancient Sanskrit Literature and Belistan inscription of Darius Herodotus

the Bharata Samhita and the versions of the Mahabharata were based cannot properly be understood if the structural strata of the present Epic are not properly investigated and shown in their clear outline. The task is admittedly a most difficult and tedious one, but the clue to the solution of this problem is in the ten days sacrifice of the Aswamedha and the horse sacrifice. The stories which were told at the time of the Aswamedha sacrifice have all been incorporated into the text of the Mahabharata. The compiler of the present Epic must have framed a connected narrative out of the whole mass of legends and myths that had grown round the controversies which centred round the performance of the sacrifice. But alas! however skilful might have been the work of the various reciters of the Mahabharata, it was not possible for any one man or group of men to add coherence to the Epic structures, which account for so much looseness of theme.

Nothing revealed the real date of the current Ramayana more than the performance of sacrifice under the Atharva Veda by king Dasaratha to get children through the help of Rishyasringa, though his own veteran priest Vasistha was there, as well as the condemnation by Rama of the practice of Yoga by a Sudra, who lowered his head from a tree over a fire as a penance to acquire merit. It speaks of the worst type of Brahminical hierarchy which was not consistent with the real age of the Ramayana, far less of Treta Yuga.

The caste system in India did not exist in the early Vedic period or at the end of the age of Dvapara, when the Bharata of the Mahabharata were composed one after the other. It reminds one of the account of Fa Hien, the Chinese traveller, bearing emphatic testimony to the degradation of the Chandalas in the Gupta age. Valmiki was a sage of the time of the Upanishads and Aranyakas, when seers deemed marriage indispensable and the Bhadrakanyaka gives the spell to obtain a male son. The saintly Svetaketu, who fixed one husband for a woman is an authority on the Kamasutra.

"Caste ought to be carefully distinguished from school, *karana*—from race and family, *Gotra* and *Kula*. This subject is beset with many difficulties, and I do not myself profess to see quite clearly on the many intricate questions connected with it. With regard to the early history of races and families there is a rich literature in Sanskrit.

You will find in the Vedic Grihya sutras a list of Brahmanic *Gotras*\* and, strange to say, you will see that the interdiction against marriages between members of the same *Gotra*, is by no means so universal as it is supposed to be. Some of the statements set forth in those Brahmanic treatises may seem to represent *pro rata* rather than real facts, but we must not forget that even such theories have often very powerfully influenced the later development of social life in India."

"If there is anything like totemism in India, let us have a full and detailed description of each individual case, instead of hiding all that may be really

\* Vide my History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pages 379—388

enlightening under the large bushel of totemism. Almost anything that outwardly distinguishes one race from another is now called totem though what seems to be the same, and even what answers the same purpose, is by no means always the same in its origin. This habit of generalising, and exaggerating has done infinite mischief. The North-American Indians have their totems, wrongly so spelt, and we know what they mean by these symbols. We find similar family symbols in many parts of the world but to call them all totems is most inaccurate. And what is the result? Because in some parts of the world marriages between members of the same totem are forbidden, statements that in Australia members of the same totem are encouraged to marry are received with incredulity. Because certain races abstain from eating animals which form their totems, we are told that the pig may in ancient times have been the totem of the Jews. *Si duo faciunt idem, non est idem*. Think only of the different Nagas or snakes in India. People are called Nagas they worship Nagas they use emblems of Nagas and we may believe that they do not eat Nagas. Is the Naga or serpent therefore to be simply classed as a totem? There are *facets et facets*, and anyone who has lived in India knows that in India, as elsewhere, nothing has such various antecedents, and nothing serves such different purposes as Naga the serpent.

His article on the earliest Aryan civilisation contains very interesting information.

In Sanskrit it is true, 'A R' root is not used with the meaning of ploughing. In that sense the South Eastern Aryas used *Kṛsh*, to draw lines or furrows, which is never used in that sense in the North Western branch. The root 'A R' may, however, have left some very old derivatives there also *ar*, in *ar* *ida*, and *ira* earth, *Gh*, *epa* in *opao*, and in *urvara*, field, *f ar* *vara* *aporpa*, In Zend *urvara* means what is grown the produce of the field rather than the field itself. If therefore Dr Hahn admits a half-nomadic agriculture among the early Aryas, he will find this is all that we contended for ourselves.

"And what applies to the oldest art, the art *par excellence*, the art of ploughing, applies naturally to all the other arts which we ascribe to the Ancient Aryas, such as plaiting sewing spinning weaving and all the rest. They must all be conceived as most simple and primitive and it would be difficult in many cases to say where plaiting ends and weaving begins. All this I thought was understood and it seems to me really as if our critics often called up a ghost in order to lay it. I consider it, therefore as a well established principle that any word which occurs in Sanskrit or Zend, and at the same time in any one of the North Western languages, may be used as a fossil belonging to a stratum previous to the Aryan Separation. If we find *ar* in Sanskrit and *ensis* in Latin, we may safely place that name in the list of the oldest Aryan weapons. If we find *sa sa* for hare in Sanskrit, and *haso* for hare in OJG, we need not hesitate to claim for the United Aryas an acquaintance with that animal. I claim a right to treat Varuna as a common Aryan God, though of the other branches of the Aryan family Greece alone has preserved his memory in Orphism. But if the ancestors of Greeks and Hindus worshipped Varuna, that is enough to stamp him as an Aryan God, known before the Greeks crossed the Bosphorus or the Hindus set eyes on the Seven Rivers."

It cannot be expected that his conclusions will be right throughout. He has admitted that "Zend and Sanskrit may be treated as twins

\* Professor Max Müller's Collected Works (Biographies of words and the Home of Aryas) pages 250--251

† Professor Max Müller's, Collected Works (Biographica of words and the Home of Aryas) page 248

and that each has a character of its own" Sanskrit has many words which it shares with Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic and of which no trace exists in Zend. But he could not make out truly what was the reason of the change of meaning of the words Deva in Sanskrit and Deeva in Zend, for the Sanskrit word means bright and god whereas the almost same word in Zend means just the opposite, an evil demon. He is not certain of his own views as he says:—

"I am quite willing to accept it as the result of a natural religious development if that can be proved" His own impression is 'that such a change of meaning accompanied as it is by similar changes in the character of certain Vedic gods, such as the Nasatya and Indra, who have become evil spirits in the Avesta (Naonhaitya Indra or Andra), points to a religious schism

This impression is not in terms of his conclusion just before it, viz ,

'No two Aryan languages are so closely united as Sanskrit and Zend, and they also teach us that the vocabulary of the two languages together make a decided historical progress on the part of the South Eastern as compared with the North Western branch. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Devas and the Asuras, the two branches of Kasyapa, lived in India and fought and separated, the Veda belonged to the Devas and Avesta to the Asuras and there must needs be a change of meaning in the book of the Devas generally and their king Indra"

This is further borne out by the learned professor's conclusion:

"What is important for our purposes is that such names as Indra, Nasatya, Apam Napat, Aramati, Gandharva, Druv, Yama, etc., are utterly unknown to the other Aryas. Sanskrit has many words which it shares with Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic and of which no trace exists in Zend. The closeness of relationship of the whole Aryan family is, of course best shown by its different members, sharing in common a grammatical articulation. One single grammatical form opens vistas which far transcend our ordinary chronology. Even a single particle, such as *Ja*, and, in Sanskrit, *ka* in Zend, *re* in Greek, *que* in Latin, *in* Gothic, *ch* in Celtic all placed after the word, shows a continuity of growth and opens strata of thought which lie deeper than the deepest strata of our globe. A look at the numerals from one to ten tells us more of forgotten intellectual labour than all the pyramids of Egypt and the palaces of Babylon. But while we admire these remnants of common Aryan work, we may also learn some lessons though referring to a later period, from differences which divide the two great branches of the Aryan family"

All these prove ancient trade relations and Aryan expansion of knowledge and literature. For instance, the equivalent word for *even* is almost one, Sanskrit Dhana, Zend Dna, Slav Latin Duna (bread). Likewise Sanskrit Ayas, Zend Ayauh, Latin Acs, Teut Aia and Sanskrit Ragata, Zend Ereyata, Arm artsath, Celt Argat, Latin Argentum, Sans Tula, Latin Tula, a name for balancing weight. Sanskrit Madhu, Zend Madhu, Greek Mead, Teut Metu, Slav. Medu, Latin Medus, Celt Mid

Sanskrit	Zend	Latin	Teut	Slav	Celt
Pasu	Pasu	Pecus	Brother	Peku	Brathir
Go	Gao			Cow	
Bhratar	Bratar			Bratru	

history of Ancient Indian society, whose advancement followed through strict observance of religious, moral and social institutions

Indians were commercial people, at first within the natural boundaries of India. The most favoured land of the world is where nature drew its boundary lines and favoured it not only with food and drink, but all the luxuries of life. The natural boundaries of India are such that it is unthinkable that any Western people in very early days could have thought of penetrating them from the West. The temperate regions of the world are where commercial people live and the people of the colder climes are essentially hunters, and migrate and have no chance of trading activities. The lowland is agricultural, whereas the mountains and forests offer inducements to domesticate animals for solving economic and trade questions. The trade and commerce in very early times was confined within India to food and drink.

In India there are countries of all climates—hot, cold and temperate. A temperate climate is better suited to manufacturing and commercial activities than any other climate. The native of colder regions must work harder than that of a temperate climate. Naturally the growth of civilisation can be ascribed to temperate climates. Artificial comforts and luxuries can only grow where there is a surplus product. Besides, the surface features of a land have a close relation to its commerce. Elevation affects vegetation and vegetable products as drought does pastoral occupations or animal inroads. The seas and the great rivers were the early means of transport, as there were hardly any roads. Bengal was famous for manufacturing small and big boats (barges) and ships, and no land of India was so fertile as that of Bengal. Nor is this all. The great Kapila and his hermitage were in Bengal and Tamralipta or Tamluk was an old sea-port. All these give good grounds for concluding that Bengal was the seat of the early civilisation and it extended to the North-West, Punjab, and eventually to the hill tracts. It was the hunting mountaineers who offered the greatest resistance to the extension of this civilisation and the occupation of their country. They hold their own even now, and it is unthinkable that migration from the West could have taken place without an expedition like that of Alexander the Great.

That Indians were a commercial people is proved by their ancient laws. The father's property descended to his sons only and was divided equally between them. The daughters had no claim. Education and culture were circumscribed within the limits of the caste system on a commercial basis. Even the constitution of the Ancient Hindu Government was on commercial lines. Royalty is the gift of fortune, but his

safety did not lie in his aggrandisement or despotism. The advantages of conquest arose from knowing how to make good use of victory and how to make everyone happy. If a king failed to do this he was disgraced more than if he had been beaten in a battle, inasmuch as the former took place if he were deceived by things in his own power, but in the latter only by those which were in the hands of fortune. The protection that a king sought in those days seems to have been from the hatred of his subjects, fortresses and armies could not save a king if the people detested him and helped the neighbouring king to defeat him. Public opinion in those days was very strong and the hero of the Ramayana had to pay very dearly for it—he was forced to exile his tired, faithful and beloved wife Sita.

The names of good monarchs are preserved in the families of kings of India like Ikshaku, Manu, Bharata. Meritorious men create names for themselves by their abilities and when that line of family continues to do works for the benefit of the public the family becomes famous. Such is the case with the generic terms of Gotra names with the families of Brahmans and the Solar and Lunar dynasties of kings of India, which has much to do with the forms of worship Devajajna and Pitriyajajna. But when a country became famous by a great number of good and celebrated men, the men were distinguished by the name of the country like Mithila, Panchala, Gour, Kanauj, etc.

Gour Brahmans officiated at the Snake sacrifice of Janmejaya, and Bhishhandaka Kasyapa's son, Risyasinga, was brought from Bengal to the Anga kingdom to officiate at a sacrifice of the king of that place, and he was given in marriage to the daughter of Dasaratha, Santa, whom the king adopted, and what is more, Risyasinga and his wife were called upon to perform the sacrifice by which the hero of the Ramayana and his brothers were born. All these are facts and figures of history. Families of ordinary merit have no place in the history of nations nor has any country in India which has not produced great men. From the names of the kings the country was named Bharatbaria and Mithila, from the great sacrifices the places were named Naimisharanya and Kurukshetra.

There is a clear mention of the names of the places where people follow distinct Vedas. Krishna Yajur Veda was prevalent in the Kuru, Panchal and Pandava kingdoms, but Sukla Yajur Veda in Mithila, Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Guzarat, etc. The Krishna Yajus were called Taittiriya Samhita and Sukla Yajus were divided by Yajnavalkya, the priest of King Janaka of Mithila, and his seventeen disciples were in charge of the seventeen divisions of the Sukla Yajur Veda. Madhyandini and Koutaham Sakha were in vogue in Anga, Banga and Kalinga. Atharva Veda

was the last of all the Vedas. No Veda has so much to do with the sacrifices which had relation to mundane success as the Atharva Veda, and the other Vedas were divided by Veda Vyasa. It was for this reason that the Mahabharata, which was made after the Krishna Yajus, is called Karsana Veda but Yajnavalkya introduced in it the Sukla Veda in his revision. Angira received Brahma Vidya from Bharadwaja, which was received by Mahatma Sounala, the next reviser of the great Epic.

Those who followed the path of Devayajna, conquered the kingdom of the Sun and did not come back to the world. That was the aim of the kings of the Solar dynasty, and those who came back by the merit of their works after enjoying heaven were the Lunar dynasty and followers of Pitriyajna. Truth reigns supreme and overcomes all difficulties and is the personification of success. To remind men of the early maxims and deeds of their forefathers is considered to be the best method of awakening in nations the different principles of virtue in different countries. If in an aristocracy the people be virtuous, they will enjoy very nearly the same happiness as in a popular Government and the state will become powerful. Constitutional monarchs are happier than despotic ones, as they have to live under the wise administration of justice. This seems to be the real aim of the great Epic called the Mahabharata. This is the truth the poet sings —

"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things"  
(Locksley Hall," Tennyson)

The Bharata Samhita, made after the Rig Veda, belonged to an earlier period than the Epics. Oudh was of comparatively later growth than the countries mentioned in the Vedas. The caste system and the force of public opinion are fully reflected in the Ramayana. The great Demon Ravana is made on the lines of modern thought.

"Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

That comes to all

(Milton 1, 66)

"By how much higher we see the mortals go  
On Fortune's wheel which runs a restless round  
We see much sooner, see his head below  
His heels, and his form prostrate on the ground"

Superstition is more dangerous than disbelief in religion and contempt of things divine. Superstition can only be eradicated by parables and knowledge, so Epic literature is full of them. The form of God is made to overcome the question of crass superstition from the root. Virtue is a kind of health, beauty and good habit of the soul. In Ancient India boys were not trained by their parents by force and harshness, but old seers directed them to learning by what amused their

minds and suited the peculiar bent of the genius of each. This is depicted in the Pausa Parva of the Mahabharata, and shows how education was then given. Its necessity is not realised by Western scholars in this light, perhaps. The general system of education will obviate repeating it every time in the case of so many heroes of different times.

The next Parva Paulama, gives the next state of life after-education in the family of Bhrigu, with whom the kings of India intermarried; which is followed by the account of the family of the priest Kasyapa, who followed this profession first. It is he who saved the Kshatriyas, the race of kings of India, from the hands of the cruel descendent of Bhrigu, Parasurama, by a novel method. This is the first act of the Bharata Samhita, the true source of the two Epics of India.

Pargiter says that —

"It is manifest from the Rig Vedic hymns that there was real civilisation in India, there were independent kings and famous exploits were celebrated in song\*"

This is of great importance, coming as it does from an European scholar who was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court and who arranged the celebrated kings in order as follows —

Ayodhya dynasty	Vaisala dynasty	Aila race
Mandbata King	Marutta King	Yayati King
Sagara ..	Yadava ..	Bharata ..
Bhagiratha ..	Sasabindu ..	Suhotra ..
Ambirasa ..	Anava ..	Ranti Deva ..
Dilipa ..	Sivi ..	Bhradratha ..
Rama ..	Gaya and Amurtarayasa of Gaya	

Emperors —Yayuvansayi Mandhatr, Bhagiratha, Bharata, Marutta and Kartavirya-Arjuna. Highly renowned kings for their wide sway are Dilipa, Nrga, Nahusa, Ambirasa, Sivi Ausinara, Rsabha, Aila, Nrga, Kusika, Gadhi, Somaka and Dilipa, and those for magnificence Rantideva, Nabhaga (Ambirasa), Yauranasva (Mandhat), Prthur, Vainya, Bhagiratha, Yayati, Nahusa and Hariscandra and those noted for their devotion and loyalty to Brahmins by gifts are Rantideva, Sankrtya, Sivi Ausinara, Pratardana, King of Kasi, Ambirasa, Yuvanava, Rama Dasarathi, Karandhama's grandson Marutta, Bhagiratha Devavrddha, Janamejaya, Vrsadarbhi, Brahmandatta, Mitrasaha, Bhumanyu, Satadyumna, Lomapada, Satyasandha, Nimi

\* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition" page 39



of Vidarbhā, Manu and Sudyumna, Sahasrajit and Irasonajit and others\*. The order after Puru is worthless, thus it places Ailavāla (Dilpa II) before Dhundhmarā, Mucukunda and Yuvanasa, though he was long posterior to them in the Aśvaja line †.

His conclusions are interesting and worth mentioning

'It is very remarkable, as pointed out before, how widely these kings differ from those extolled in the Rig Veda and Vedic literature, even when the lists are Brahmanical. Rig Vedic kings are practically non-existent here, and eulogies of kings in all that literature hardly count in the compilation of these lists. This fact shows how entirely apart from general popular thought stood Vedic literature in this matter. The popular scale of values was totally different from that of Vedic Brahmins. Hence it is clear how little Vedic Brahmins were in touch with public life and interests, and of what small importance Vedic literature is as regards historical matters. These divergencies and also the fact that the Puranas sometimes contain statements that differ from those in Brahmanic literature show that the Puranic stream of tradition flowed independently of the Vedic stream. The former sometimes incorporated Brahmanical doctrines and tales, and Vedic literature sometimes borrowed from Puranic and Aitihasic (historical) sources. The divergence however is substantial and shows that the Puranic Brahmins must have received the different account when they took from the Puranas and that they preserved it, notwithstanding the disagreements as being genuine tradition. The true inference therefrom would be that the Puranic Brahmins had already begun to incorporate some dharma in the Puranas in his time †.'

Draupadī and Dhristadyumna were torn out of the sacrifice referred to above. The portion of the Mahabharata relating to the incident has great historic importance. The hermitage of Kasyapa was on the bank of the Bhagirathi, where the king Drupada went. The two Brahmins Jaja and Upajaja, descendants of the Kasyapa family, officiated as the chief priests of Drupada to make him blessed with children and a son, and the good queen's refusal to go to Jaja reflects the most delicate idea of modesty of those days. There the incident of Parasurama was referred to by the priest Jaja before accepting the priesthood. The younger brother cited that his elder brother was covetous and he would perhaps agree to do the sacrifice moved by presents. Both the brothers eventually took part in the ceremony. Only that portion of the translation referring to the Epic idea of modesty is given below —

'Upajaja said — 'O king, a son will be born to you who will possess, as you desire, great prowess, great energy and great strength'. The Brahmana said — 'Then king Drupada, being desirous of obtaining a son who was to slay the son of Bharadwaja (Drona), began to make the necessary preparations for the success of his wish. Jaja then poured libations of the ghee on the sacrificial fire and ordered the queen thus, 'O queen, O daughter in law of Prsata, come here a son and a daughter have come for you'. The queen said — 'O Brahmana my mouth is filled with saffron and other perfumes, my body bears many sweet scents, I am not now fit for accepting the sacrificial ghee which would give me offspring. O Jaja, wait for me a little, for that happy consummation'. Jaja said, — 'Whether you come or wait why

\* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient India Historical Tradition," pp 41, 42 †page 42.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition" pp 42-43, and 49.

should not the object of this sacrifice be accomplished when the oblation has already been prepared by me and sanctified by Upajaya's invocations ?'

This is referred to in verses 75 and 76, Chapter CCCXLVIII, Shanti Parva, as worshipping God Narayana with horse head, illustrating its old story. This makes the difference between Vedic and Epic ideas of worship and modesty quite clear and marked.

The sort of sacrifice performed by Jaya and Upajaya was not praised and the cultured ladies avoided the request of the performers of these sacrifices on false pretexts. The Mahabharata says (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCLXIII, verse 10)

"If the sacrificer and the priest allow themselves to be guided by desire of fruit, their children take the stigma. If, however, they are not moved by the desire of fruit their children become the same. From sacrifices originate children like clear water from the sky." "They who seek the acquisition of the highest object of life, who do not hanker after earthly riches, who do not care for future provision, and who are free of envy, follow the course of truth and practise self-control as their sacrifice" (verse 18).

This was the Vedic sacrifice and the sacrifice reformed under Yoga system is mentioned—

'They who know the distinction between body and soul who are given to Yoga, and who meditate on Brahman always succeed in pleasing others' (verse 19)

The Yoga system of worship was introduced and it was not then well spoken of or revered.

'The sages of Yore were not followers of these doctrines of Yoga' (verse 6)

Benares was the centre of ancient culture and learning—the proud sage Jaya was advised to go there to learn the true religion from the very wise Vaisya trader Tuladhara. (Ibid CCLXI, verses 41, 42)

The Epic History of creation dwelling on the difference between the religion of renunciation and of action is said in the beginning of the Mahabharata of Vyasa, in Chapter CCCXLI (Shanti Parva) in the version of the South-Southern discourse with the questions—

i. 'How is the powerful God Narayana, master of the Vedas and their Branches, at once the doer and enjoyer of sacrifices?'

ii. 'Why has he then made so many gods partaking the shares in sacrifices favouring religion of action while he himself is a follower of religion of renunciation?'

Here God is given the distinct name of Mahapurusha (verse 29) and the Narayana section begins with his eulogy by Narada in the old style of language.

This chapter is the introduction of the Bharata Samhita, which begins with the ode of Mahapurusha by the divine minstrel Narada. Narada and Vasistha were brothers-in-law. Narada was Kasyapa's son and Vasistha was his son-in-law. They were contemporary men. So Vasistha's becoming priest to the Bharata kings—strange. How

he got the priesthood however, is of interest. It will give the name of the contemporary Bharata king. The Mahabharata mentions that the virtuous king Sambarana was a worshipper of the Sun and all men but Brahmans idolised him \*. He lost his kingdom, which was overrun by the armies of the Panchals and he recovered it from them through the good offices of his newly appointed priest Vasistha, whom he met in his flight in the Punjab † and who was married to the daughter of the Sun through his priesthood. The engagement of the priest Vasistha was said to have taken place to recover the kingdom as well as for the marriage. In Chapter CLXXV it is mentioned by the Gandharva King Chitraratha as being exclusively for the marriage.

The fight between Vasistha and Visvamitra has been mentioned. King Dushmanta was a contemporary of Visvamitra, who married his daughter Sakuntala, the mother of Bharata. The son Kuru was married to a girl belonging to the Yadu family ‡. This was not the first instance. Puru's grandson Prachinara married Asmaka of the Yadav family. It is evident that marriage was not then forbidden between agnates. This Chapter XCV, Adi Parva, is also important as it gives the marriage relations between the Royal houses of India. Janmejoya, the son of Poru, was the first of that name. Matanara's mother was Jvala, the daughter of Takshaka. Matanara started a twelve years' sacrifice to please Saraswati and won her as his wife. It is clear that the marriage alliances between the kings of India took place between the countries of Kosala, Drisadvata, Kekaya, Bidurva, Anga, Kalinga, Gandhara Bisala and Takshaka, etc. The daughter of Suka Kritvi was married to Anuha, of the Nipi family, king of Kampilya of the South Panchala, and his son was married to Sauniri, the daughter of Devala. All these inter-marriages between Brahman sages and Kshatriya kings establish beyond doubt that the hereditary caste system was not then fully crystallised and there is a marriage which is called Attri-Bharadvaji.

The genealogy of Chapter XCV is described by Vaishampayana as he heard it from Draupayana himself (*vide* verse 6), consequently it is authorised and contains the names of the queens of the different countries. Its importance therefore cannot be minimised. The learned Pargiter admits rightly that in genealogy son means descendant and father means ancestor. Consequently, the genealogical tables he published are nothing but suggestions based on his own preparation, on which no reasonable man can depend for tracing the ancient civilisation, customs and laws. But it proves beyond doubt two important facts as to the age

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\* Chapter CLXXIII, verse 18, Adi Parva

† Chapter XCIV, Adi Parva

‡ The Mahabharata, Chapter XCVI, Adi Parva

of the Epics of India and their worth as the history of Ancient India. The kings of the two Epics are found contemporaneous and belonging to the same age. That the heroes of the Epics were not mythological, fanciful characters are proved in the names of places in India.

In Dakshina Kosala there is a hill called Ramagiri, distinguishing the place where Rama lived in his exile as his own mother Kausalya, belonged to that place. Kaikeyi, the step-mother of Rama belonged to the Kekaya country; her son Bharata obtained that kingdom and his two sons Taksa and Puskara are said to have conquered Gandhar and reigned in two places, which were hall marked with their names Takssa (the famous Taxilla) and Puskaravati. Satrugana attacked Satvata Yadavas, killed Madhaba Lavana and built the capital of Mathura,\* where his two sons Subahu and Surasena reigned. The name of Surasena lingers in the name of the country. It is said also that the name owes its origin to a son of the Haihaya Arjuna Kartavirya. Bhima Satvata seems to have recovered the kingdom and Andhaka reigned there as a contemporary of Rama's son Kusa,† who founded a town Kusasthali on the Vindhya hills. Andhaka's descendents reigned at Mathura down to Ugrasena and his son Kamsa, whom Krishna and Balarama killed.

Lakshmana's sons Angada and Cadraketu reigned in Karapatha-desa near the Himalayas, where their names are found in the capitals Angadiya and Candracaka. Bhima Satvata was a contemporary of Rama and Andhaka was of Rama's son Kusa. So the Yadavas and Rama become contemporaneous and of the same age, the end of Dvapara. The Yadavas were referred to in the Uttarakanda, and Yajati and Nahusa are mentioned in the genealogy of the Ikshaku family of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, thus establishing matrimonial alliances between the Bharata and Ikshaku families. They both descended from one stock. Chyavana was a contemporary of Nahusa and married Sukanya, the daughter of Suryati, king of Guzerata, and Usanas Sukra, the brother of Chyavana, married his daughter Devajani to Yajati, which makes it clear that Sukra wanted to hold sway in the kingdom of Yajati. Rika Aurva married the daughter of Gadhi, the king of Kanyakubja. Satyabati, and from him descended Jamadagni. Visvamitra, son of the king Gadhi, played a very important part in the Ramayana as being a contemporary of Rama.

All these prove conclusively that the heroes of the two Epics of India belong to the same age and were closely connected by matrimonial

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\* Uttarakanda Ramayana, Canto 62, verse 6

† Professor Fargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 170. He quoted the Mahabharata account.

alliances. Bharadvaja has raised important controversy as to who was the priest of the king of Benares and is mentioned in both the Epics as playing important parts. Pargiter says —

"There is a story about the famous Paurava king, Dusyanta's son Bharata, and Bharadvaja. Bharata had three wives and sons by them. They killed their sons because he was disappointed in them, and he was thus bereft of heirs. In order to obtain a son he performed many sacrifices and lastly made an offering to the Maruts. They gave him Brishaspatis son Bharadvaja as an adopted son. Bharadvaja thus became a Kshatriya. He did not succeed Bharata, but begot a son named Vitatha. Bharata then died. Bharadvaja afterwards consecrated Vitatha as the successor, and then either died or departed to the forest. This is a very remarkable story and deserves careful consideration, because it throws much light on the traditional accounts of Bharata's successors, the Bharatas or Bharratas. It is emphasized by the statement in the Vayu that Bharadvaja by the adoption became a Kshatriya and had two fathers, and so was called Dvayamushyajana."

The sage Bharadvaja raised important questions on the progressive stages of society and caste but the answers were not all to the point. He said it was a commonplace cant of the world that happiness was the chief aim of life, and that it originated from good acts and sorrow from sins. The first Creator Brahma observed the vow of celibacy, the lord of Durga reduced the god of love to ashes and happiness was not sought by great people. "What is the attribute of the soul which was sought by the sages?", he questioned. Bhrigu answered by referring to the stages of life and the different modes of living. But the real answer was given in the great Epic in the lives of the great heroes. The Epic history of ancient civilisation begins from the days of the Bharata kings and gives a glimpse of the previous time in the old Gathas and traditions it set forth.

Both the Epics belong to the Dvapara age and they depict the civilisation, customs and laws of that time. Veda was arranged in the Dvapara age and the question of sacrifice became acute, as to whether animals or corn should be offered, in the time of Basu Uparichara of the Chedi dynasty, with whose account the Mahabharata begins, and the question of religion with the doctrine of Ahimsa (aversion to slaughter) became the burning question of the day. This is admitted by an European scholar like Pargiter (see page 315 of his book "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition").

The learned Pargiter has given his important opinion about Vyasa's work regarding his arrangement of the Vedas as follows —

"The final compilation was made after Devapi's time and not until that of Vyasa who followed him by about half a century because hymns are attributed to Asita or Derali, and Derali was a contemporary of the Pandavas (page 233) and so of Vyasa. Vyasa must have added all the hymns that were incorporated latest, and completed the canon. Tradition entirely supports this. It says generally that he

arranged the Veda he divided the Veda into four, he divided the four pada Veda into four and there are explicit statements that he compiled the Rig Veda. Both tradition and the latest hymns in the Rig Veda therefore show the time when the canon was established, and tradition proclaims the man by whom that was done. Only a Rishi of commanding ability, knowledge and eminence could have made it a canon accepted unquestioningly thereafter, and that is exactly the character and position which tradition unanimously attributes to Vyasa, a Rishi pre-eminent above all others. He would probably have completed that work about a quarter of a century before the Bharata battle, that is, about 980 B C (p 182). The priestly literature has suppressed all these facts (page 10) "

"There is no definite tradition about the Atharva Veda, but some statements throw light on it " "

He has advanced good grounds regarding the development of Brahminism in India and the Kshatriya influence of mutual co-operation to advance civilisation in different parts of India as is reflected in the Epics. The region which was called Brahnavarta in Manu ii, 17, 19, and other names, Mahabharata iii, 83, 5074, 7073-8, owes its origin to Brahminism, and about the Kshatriya influence, the learned Pargiter says —

"Brahmanism thus appears to have developed in accordance with Aila ideas, and to have owed much of its advance to the influence of Kshatriyas, (Vedic Index ii, 87). There is no good reason to doubt that Brahmanas learnt from princes, (see ante, page 96), first, of Visramitra and his sons, and afterwards mainly of the Bharata princes and Kshatriyan Brahmanas. It continued to flourish in harmony with later kings of that family, and consolidated its position as a caste, especially in connection with sacrifice. That such Aila influences did produce modifications is suggested by the remarkable statements made in the Ramayana (which can hardly have been the outcome of later Brahmanical views), first, that, while eastern and southern kings and kings of the distant Punjab were invited to Dasaratha's sacrifice at Ayodhya, none of the neighbouring Paurava (Bharata) and Yadava kings, who flourished then in all the middle region of N India (page 170 2, 276), were invited, and secondly, that Dasaratha called in the help, not of Brahmanas from Madhyadesa, but of the rustic Risyasringa from Anga (for his alleged upbringing and qualifications, see MBh iii, 110, 9390 f., Ram i, 9 and 10, see page 164). It was at that time that the great development of Brahmanism had taken place among the Bharatas. Ayodhya and the Vasisthas had no association then with that Brahmanically elite region. Brahmanism as it took shape under the Bharatas apparently differed from that at Ayodhya. Moreover, all those Brahmanas had little in common with the non-Aryan tribes of the Deccan (though Deccan kings were invited to the sacrifice), as is suggested by the maltreatment of munis by Rakshsas in the story of Rama, for estrangement grew into hostility, which when developed was portrayed in the frequent stories of how Rishis were afflicted by such folk stigmatized and mythologized as demonic—a view which was carried back into earlier times in later Brahmanic stories. Ultimately Brahmanism as developed among the Bharatas became the dominant form "†

It must not be overlooked that the Vaisyas of Ancient India played a very important part in the progress of civilisation and were more

\* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", page 318

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", page 314.

numerous and more powerful than the Kshatriyas Vedas and Epics testify to it In White Yajur Veda there is Vaisya Sabitri and Black Yajur Veda says that the Vaisyas owe their existence to Rik. Trittiriya Brahman bears this out The Vedas say, Vaisya is Arya and one of the three colours of the Aryas of Ancient India They were followers of Bhadrakali and it is said in the Srimad Bhagabata that when the king of the Vaisyas, in order to obtain a son, attempted to sacrifice the mute Bharata of Angirasa family whose place is in Allahabad the deity saved his life and took the life of the king who offered the sacrifice These merchants were the pioneers of civilisation and introduced it all over the world in their maritime trade They introduced caligraphy for trade purposes

Civilisation spread from India and no country in the world can claim its civilisation prior to India Besides, the prime cause of primitive migration is usually set down as a state of pressure on the food supply and the necessity of seeking a new home for comfort All these do not apply to India, where the only question was how to make use of the surplus food and drink as a pressure on the wealth supply of the country It was for this that the Vaisyas were much revered by the kings of India and the Brahmanas To guard against the temporary failure of monsoon rains irrigation is necessary Drainage must follow to guard against the land being waterlogged and sour The Chenab is one of the five rivers of the Punjab where a large number of canals were constructed serving no less than 3,000 square miles which had been practically a desert The dry districts of the North-West were under cultivation in the days of the Epic

Consequently trade and traders did not live in those parts of India nor could they thrive there Bengal was famous for boat and vessel making as well as for fishing from time immemorial The names of Jahnu, Bhagirath and Sagar became celebrated for improving Bengal by the cutting of the sea, bringing the Ganges to fall into the sea, thereby giving every facility to trade and commerce Vedas and Epics testify that both inward and outward trade was carried on by vessels and boats The most fertile country in India was Bengal and it received the epithet of "Golden" for its prosperity and growth That was the place where the great sage Kapila lived and the heroes of the Epics paid tribute to the sacred place The Asuras Madhu and Kaitava lived in the jungles of Muthura and Gayasura at Gaya, a great shrine of India where the oblations to the dead are offered Such a practice is also followed in Orissa Baitarani is the name of that place All these give good grounds for thinking that from Bengal and Orissa the ancient civilisation travelled to the Upper regions of the Punjab.





that being who had addressed him as India the king of the gods and the lord of Sachī Kāśyapa then adored that god having the best of horses to carry him. Receiving afterwards with the god's permission, the Brahmin returned to his house.

It will also be seen in the Mahābhārata that Vaisya Tuladhara read a lecture to a sage who considered himself a successful Jogi. In the sacrifices the Vaisya received curd. Bhalandra, Bandya, Sankriti were Vaisyas who composed Vedic hymns or incantations according to Matsya Purāṇa and Markandeya Pūrāṇa. King Nabhag married the daughter of a Vaisya. Dhruvamsi says the two sons of Nabhagaristha became Brahmanas. Yuyutsu, who was Dhritarastra's son by a Vaisya wife, alone survived the great battle of Kurukṣhetra and had gone over to the side of the Pandavas.

In Ancient India trade and traders had a very high place. The provinces not included in the Brahmanvarta in Manu Smṛiti belonged to the traders, who were independent men leaving the kingdom of any king who would persecute them at the instance of the priests. Besides the traders were not in any way under the domination of kings or their priests and were left in the peaceful enjoyment of their occupation to increase the wealth of the country by trade and commerce. The Vaisyas were thus in a better position than the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas at the time of the Indian Epics. The caste division during the time of the Epic composition was more a matter of merit than heredity. There is a very important discourse between Bhṛigu and Bharadvāja which explodes the wrong theory that Aryans and non-Aryans were the invaders and the aborigines of India, respectively (Chapter CLXXXVIII, Shānti Pārva, Slokas 10-17, page 280, English Translation of the Mahābhārata).

\* Bhṛigu said—There is in fact no distinction between the different castes. The whole world at first consisted of Brahmanas created equally by Brahman, men have on account of their acts been divided into various castes. They who found excessive pleasure in enjoyment became possessed of the attributes of harshness and anger, endued with courage and were unmindful of the works of piety and worship,—those Brahmanas possessing the quality of Darkness became Kshatriyas. Those Brahmanas again who, unmindful of the duties laid down for them, became endued with both the qualities of Goodness and Darkness, and follow the professions of cattle tending and agriculture became Vaisyas. Those Brahmanas again who were given to untruth and injuring other creatures possessed of cupidity,—performed all sorts of works for their maintenance and had no purity of behaviour and thus possessed of the quality of Darkness, became Sudras. Divided by these occupations, Brahmanas, falling away from their own order became members of the other three castes. All the four castes, therefore, have always the right to perform all pious rites and sacrifices. Thus were the four castes at first created equally by Brahman who ordained for all of them the observances described (in the Vedas). Cupidity alone brought about the fall of many, who were possessed by ignorance. The Brahmanas are always devoted to the Brahma scriptures and practising vows and restraints, are capable of understanding Brahma. Their penances, therefore, never prove fruitless.

They amongst them are not Brahmanas who cannot understand that every created thing is Supreme Brahma. These, falling away, became members of various (inferior) castes."

Later on the great sage describes the region of the Huna sages where the aborigines did not dwell but where the pious, cultured sages dwelt. This is the region about which the sage Bharadvaja heard but did not see and wish to know.

'Bhrigu said—Towards the north on the other side of Himavat, which is sacred and full of merit, there is a sacred, blessed, and highly desirable region. That is called the other world. The men who dwell in that region are righteous in act, pious, of pure hearts, freed from cupidity and errors of judgment, and not subject to miseries of any sort. That region is, equal to Heaven, possessed of excellent attributes. Death comes there at the proper time. Diseases never attack the inhabitants. Nobody looks for the wives of other people. Every one is devoted to his own wife. These people do not assail or kill one another, or covet one another's things. There is no sin or doubt. There the fruits of all sacred rites are visible. There some enjoy seats and best sorts of drinks and food, and live within palaces and mansions. There some, bedecked with ornaments of gold, surround themselves with every article of enjoyment. There are again, some that eat very sparingly for only keeping body and soul together. There some, with great exertion, try to suppress the vital airs. Here some men are devoted to righteousness, and some addicted to deceit. Some are happy and some wretched, some are poor and some rich. Here are to be found exhaustion, and fear, and delusion and painful hunger. Here cupidity for wealth is also seen a passion that stupefies even the learned. Here various opinions are advanced by those who do virtuous or sinful deeds. That wise man who knows all those opinions which may be divided into two sorts, is never sullied by sin. Deceit with fraud, theft, slander, malice, oppression, injury, treachery, and untruth, are vices which destroy the merit on one's penances. A learned man however who avoids them finds the merit of his penances multiplied. Here there is much thought about fair and sinful acts. This region where we live is the field of action. One reaps the fruits of his actions, according to the life he has led. Here in days of Yore, the very Creator and all the gods having performed proper penances, with the Rishis became cleansed and attained to Brahma. The northern part of the Earth is highly auspicious and sacred. People of our region who perform fair deeds or show regard for Yoga, are born in that region. Others are born in the intermediate species. Some again, when their lease of life runs out, become lost on Earth.'

The Northern part of India (or perhaps the region to the north of the Himalayas, & e., Tibet) was then regarded as Heaven, the middle parts are the Earth and the Southern parts are Patal, perhaps. Bhrigu perhaps had been to Tibet, whence a copy of Bhrigu Samhita has been rescued.

Manu gives the centres of ancient civilisation in the distinct divisions of India. The country lying between the mountains of the Himalaya and the Vindhya right up to the sea from east and west was called Aryavarta. The place between the rivers of Saraswati and Drishadvati, which formed part of Kurukshetra, was called Mahavarta; and that between the Ganges and the Jumna, included the district of

\* The Mbh Chapter CXIII, Shanti Parva, Slokas 8—22.

Mathura, which were the territories of the Kurus, Panchals, Sarasenans and Matsyas, was called Brihmarshi Desā. The confluence of the Ganges, the Jumna and the Sarasvati in Allahabad and Tribeni in Bengal were held in great esteem from a very long time. The name of Prayaga owes its origin to the number of celebrated sacrifices performed there by the kings and celestials and is held as a great shrine by all sections of Hindus, viz., the Yogis, Fakirs, Sanyasis and domestic people. Such is also the case with the Ashrama of Kapila at the junction of the river Ganges and the sea.

Professor Rapson's comparison of the religious and social conditions during the Vedic periods of progress is interesting.

"Religious and social conditions as reflected in the Yajur Veda, differ very widely from those of the period of the Rig Veda. All the moral elements in religion seem to have disappeared, extinguished by an elaborate and complicated system of ceremonial which is regarded no longer as a means of worship but as an end in itself. Sin in the Rig Veda means the transgression of the divine laws which govern the universe; in the Yajur Veda it means the omission—whether intentional or accidental—of some detail in the endless succession of religious observances which filled man's life from birth to death. The sacrifice had developed into a system of magic by means of which supernatural powers might be attained and the powers thus gained might be used for any purpose good or bad, spiritual or temporal, and even to coerce the gods themselves. In the Yajur Veda also the earlier stages of the caste system, in essentially the form which it bears to the present day, are distinctly seen. Not only are the four great social divisions hardening into castes, but a number of mixed castes also are mentioned. Thus were fixed the outlines of the system which subsequently, by further differentiation according to trades, etc. became extraordinarily complicated. The tremendous spiritual power which the sacrifice placed in the hands of the priestly caste, was no doubt the cause which directly led to the predominance of this caste in the social system. The religion and the social system of the Yajur Veda represent, to a great extent, the development of tendencies which are clearly to be recognized in the Rig Veda, but they also, no doubt, show the influence of the religious beliefs and the social institutions of the earlier non-Aryan inhabitants of India, and it seems possible sometimes to trace this influence. To cite one instance only—Snake-worship is common among primitive peoples in India. No trace of it is to be found in the Rig Veda but it appears in the Yajur Veda. The presumption, therefore, is that it was borrowed from the earlier non-Aryan peoples."

Professor Rapson speaks of the regions where the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed by their geographical references. He thinks that the twenty-five rivers relate to the great branches of the five rivers of the Punjab. He admitted that the great rivers of Jumna, Ganges and Sarasvati were known in the times of the Rig Veda and they are independent rivers and have branches. His conclusion "that the Aryans of the Rig Veda inhabited a territory which included the portions of South East Afghanistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab" cannot be correct †. He has admitted that

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\*Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India", pages 47—49

† Ibid, pp. 39—40

"The type of civilisation depicted in the Rig Veda is by no means primitive. It is that of a somewhat advanced military aristocracy ruling in the midst of a subject people of far inferior culture."\* "The Aryan tribes were not always united against the people of the land, but sometimes made war among themselves. Each tribe was governed by a king, and the kingly office was usually hereditary, but sometimes, perhaps, elective." "The constitution of the tribe was modelled on that of the family and the king, as head, ruled with the aid and advice of a council of elders who represented its various branches. Thus, the state of society was patriarchal but it was no longer nomadic. The people lived in villages, and their chief occupations were pastoral and agricultural. In war, the chief weapons were bows and arrows, though swords, spears, and battle axes were also used. The army consisted of foot-soldiers and charioteers. The war chariots, which may have been used only by the nobles, carried two men, a driver and a fighting man who stood on his left. In the arts of peace considerable progress had been made. The skill of the weaver, the carpenter, and the smith furnish many a simile in the hymns. The metals chiefly worked were gold and copper. It is doubtful if silver and iron were known in the age of the Rig Veda. Among the favourite amusements were hunting, chariot-races and games of dice—the last mentioned a sad snare both in Vedic times and in subsequent periods of Indian history. The sacrifice is the link which connects man with the gods, who take delight in the oblations, and, in return, shower blessings—wealth in cows and horses, and strength in the form of stalwart sons—on the pious worshipper. There are also other aspects of this religion. The spirits of the departed dwell in 'the world of the Fathers', where they are dependent for their sustenance on the offerings of their descendants, and ever lurking around man are the demons of famine and disease, whose insidious attacks can only be averted through the favour of the beneficent deities. In the early period of the Rig Veda, the caste-system was unknown—the four castes are only definitely mentioned in one of the latest hymns—yet the social conditions which led to its development were already present. Of the more primitive inhabitants of the land the Rig Veda teaches us little, except that they were a pastoral people possessing large herds of cattle and having as defences numerous strong-holds."†

What the Professor says in the last sentence is conclusive that whatever he said was pure guesswork so far as it relates to the earlier period. It is far better to rely on Epic literature than Vedic literature for the source of the ancient civilisation and great Western scholars like Professor Max Muller admitted it. The importance of the Indian Epics cannot be gainsaid. The three Vedas are directly dependent on the Rig Veda. The Bharata Samhita, as far as can be deduced from the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, is the work of the great sage Kapila (*vide* Go-Kapilya dialogue). Even now men of all classes pay tribute to the memory of the great man and consider themselves immune from all sins by bathing at the estuary of the Ganges. The heroes of the Epics did so. It is the best proof that the source of civilisation cannot be anywhere else than where the greatest philosopher lived and gave lectures to his disciples. Time has obliterated the place which was over the centre of early civilisation. The formation of the delta of Bengal was perhaps referred to in the great Epic as the building of Jamby Island.

\*Professor E J Rapson's "Ancient India", pages 40-41.

†Professor E J Rapson's "Ancient India", pages 41-45.

Benares became the centre of culture after the displacement of the seat of Kapila. It might be the work of time or that of his enemies. Vyasa composed his work in Badrikasrama, which was the second edition of the Bharata Samhita with his *siksha* to his son Suka modifying the views of Kapila. But the Mahabharata was made when Vyasa adopted the priesthood to the kings of Kurnu, whose line he revived by the performance of sacrifices in the way Sagara's line was revived by Kapila when Bhagiratha propitiated him with his good conduct and piety. Madri's burning of herself in the funeral pyre of king Pandu, bespeaks a later age than that of Pandu. If that really was the custom of the Kuru family or of the Kshatriya race at that time, it would have been followed after the great battle of Kurukshetra by the widows of the fallen warriors. This has not attracted the attention of the critics of the Epic before. Madri's marriage with Pandu is a myth and seems to be the creation of the dramatic Mahabharata and nothing else.

The original Epics are the real source of ancient civilisation. It is for this that the original Epics must be found and all pains for this have been undertaken after lifelong study. It is a hard task full of difficulties. Success depends upon an unbiassed close study of facts and a knowledge of Epic literature in relation to the Sanskrit literature of Ancient India from the time of the Vedas till now.

## RELIGION.

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The history of religion consists of two prominent elements, religious ideas and acts. Dogma and ritual are not religion. They are only its necessary manifestations. Everything is belief in which the doctrinal, ritualistic or ethical elements are balanced. One cannot get an insight into a faith without studying the doctrine which prompts peculiar rites and acts. That depends on a study of the mythical and dogmatical conceptions, and ethical institutions where they took definite shape. It was thus that the Epic which becomes the medium of comparative theology in its widest sense was called the Mahabharata and the fifth Veda of the Hindus, the best of all the sacred books. Its religion is characterised by sacred rites and institutions, which speak of the highest phases of ethical principles with their developments. The great Epic lifted the veil which for many centuries hid from the general public knowledge of the essence of the sacred writings of the Vedas.

The development of society is traced usually in a purely historical spirit which does not bring within its scope the crude questions of philosophy. Ethics and politics, though separate, are not absolutely so if carefully observed, for states or organisations are of different forms and are judged in relation to the individual and general freedom of a country or a nation. The Indian Epic characters delineate the play of cultured interests with the stable objectivity of law in terms of the abiding consciousness of the greater whole in which the world moves and has its being. Historically it may be said in an intelligent sense to explain the higher by showing its genesis from the lower, but in philosophy it is just the reverse, the lower is explained by the higher. Philosophy deals with the imminent laws of creation which have hardly any connection with or bearing on the characters of any Epic; yet it is sought to be proved by a cultured Indian student that the story of the Mahabharata is nothing but a conflict of all the six systems of Indian philosophy.

Apart from the common motives of acquiring religious merit or expiating sins, Indian shrines are frequented even now more for the performance of Sradh ceremonies in honour of deceased ancestors or for carrying the ashes of the dead to be thrown in the waters of some sacred river or to entomb them in a sacred place with a view to preserve the sacred memory in the sacred place. Before the Brahmanical revival in India, which almost drove Buddhism out of India,

the Buddhist converts of China used to visit the chief scenes of the great man's birth, death and activities of life in Kapilvastu, Kasinagar and Benares, respectively. The Chinese travellers Fa-Hien, Hwai-Sang, Sungyan and Huen Tsang came to visit the pilgrimages and collect sacred books. A rational nature admits of nothing but what is serviceable to mankind. There is divinity that stirs humanity. The Hindu Puranas speak of pilgrimages connected with the Pandavas and the Epics testify to the same.

Still now no cogent reasons have been advanced to prove that the principal figures in the Mahabharata were not actual characters in history. The negative argument advanced by scholars is not convincing. The theory that the Pandavas were mythical heroes may be fascinating, but how can one brush aside the remains of the palaces and buildings of the Pandavas in the happy valley of Kashmir?

"The ground about it was then occupied by the original city of Srinagar the modern name of Pandrathan being a corruption of the Sanskrit Puranadhisthana i.e. 'the old capital'. Dr H. H. H. however, supposes the name to be derived from Pandu and Durondun the father of the Pandus. The seat of Government had been transferred to the present site by King Pravarasena II nearly 500 years before the foundation of this temple but the old city was not entirely deserted until its destruction by fire in the reign of Ashimanya about the year A.D. 950. Martand lies on the karewa above Islamabad, and is easily reached from Islamabad Bawan and Achabal. The ruins of the Hindu temple of Martand, or as it is commonly called the Pandu kuru or the house of the Pandus and kurus—the cyclops of the East—are situated on the highest part of a karewa where it commences to rise to its junction with the mountains, about 3 miles east of Islamabad. Occupying, undoubtedly, the finest position in Kashmir this noble ruin is the most striking in size and situation of all the existing remains of Kashmir grandeur. The temple itself is not now more than 40 feet in height, but its solid walls and bold entablatures towering over the fluted pillars of the surrounding colonnade give it a most imposing appearance. There are no petty confused details, but all are distinct and massive and most admirably suited to the general character of the building. Many vain speculations have been hazarded regarding the date of erection of this temple, and the worship to which it was appropriated. It is usually called the House of the Pandus by the Brahmins and by the people Martand, or the sun to which the temple was dedicated. They are entirely composed of a blue limestone, which is capable of taking the highest polish, a property to which I mainly attribute the present beautiful state of preservation of most of the Kashmirian buildings. Not one of these temples has a name excepting that of Martand which is called in the corrupt Kashmirian pronunciation Matan, but they are all known by the general name of Pandavankilari or 'Pandus house', a title to which they have no claim whatever unless indeed the statement of Ptolemy can be considered of sufficient authority upon such a subject. He says 'circa autem Bidaspum Pandorum regio—the kingdom of the Pandus is upon the Betasta or (Behat) that is, it corresponded with Kashmir. This passage would seem to prove that the Pandavas still inhabited Kashmir so late as the second century of our era. Granting the correctness of this point there may be some truth in the universal attribution of the Kashmirian temples to the race of Pandus, for some of these buildings date as high as the end of the fifth century and there

are others that must undoubtedly be much more ancient, perhaps even as old as the beginning of the Christian era. One of them dates from 220 B. C." \*

The Mahabharata begins with snake worship and the ancient religion of Kashmir coincides with it

"The religion in Kashmir has in like manner been Hindu from a very remote date. Originally, no doubt, it was Ophite or snake worship but this is part of the Hindu ritual, and the Nagas are included in the orthodox pantheon. The adoration of Siva was soon grafted upon this, even if the two rites were not originally identified. We have frequent occasions to notice the important figure which snakes and snake deities make in the worship and traditional history of Kashmir. The extent and permanence of the superstition we may learn from Abul Fazal, who observes that in seven hundred places there are carved figures of snakes which they worship (An Essay on the Hindu History of Kashmir, by H. H. Wilson)†.

Even now the longevity of the people of Kashmir is remarkable

"Gandhara thus forms a most important link connecting India with the West, and it holds a unique position among all the countries of India from the fact that its history may be traced with remarkable continuity from the times of the Rig Veda even down to the present day. Its inhabitants, the Gandharis, are mentioned both in the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda, and Gandhara appears among the countries of India in Sanskrit literature from the period of the Upanishads onwards, in the earliest Buddhist literature, and in the most ancient Indian inscriptions. It remained a Persian province for about two centuries, and, after the downfall of the Empire in 331 B. C., it, together with the Persian province of 'India' or 'the country of the Indus' which had been added to the Empire by Darius not long after 516 B. C., came under the sway of Alexander the Great. Through Gandhara and the Indian province was exercised the Persian influence, which so greatly modified the civilisation of North Western India."‡

The Mahabharata has more historical and geographical backgrounds than the Ramayana to demonstrate the expansion of civilisation and religion, if not philosophy, in India. It did not preserve the line of kings with events like Rajatarangini. The Western theory of the home of early civilisation being outside India is Utopian, as civilisation is spread either by conquest or by trade. Indian trade dates back to more than 2000 B. C. The products and manufactures were distributed in India through navigation more than any other means of transport. The well-known King Solomon changed the name of the hill Sandhuan to Sulman§. This establishes the Hindu occupation before the reign of Solomon.

Religion and history are found combined in the Hindu Puranas and the great incident which is said to have led to the first ill-feeling between the step brothers, the Asuras and the Devas, was the unjust distribution of the Ambrosia churned out of the sea. The mountain Mandar was

\* Professor Walter R. Lawrence's "The Valley of Kashmir" pages 174, 170 and 185

† Professor Walter R. Lawrence's "The Valley of Kashmir," page 299 (foot-note)

‡ Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India," pages 81-82

§ Professor Walter R. Lawrence's "The Valley of Kashmir," page 298.



the staff used in the churning and the Basuki was the cord round it. The Mandar mountain is the Parasnath hill in Bihar, in the old province of Bengal. The great Kapila, founder of Samkhya philosophy, excluded Bengal from Aryavarta.

"The following Kshatriya castes, through the extinction (non performance) of their proper religious rites and on account of not seeing (i.e., in the absence of their contact with) Brahmanas, have been degraded to the Sudra caste in this world (43)\*"

This is often wrongly referred to Bengal, etc., but it should be read with the III Chapter of the Manu Samhita, verses 14—16. The report of 1887 of the Archaeological Survey of Bengal says —

"Mandar is mentioned in the Mahabharata not only in connection with the churning of the Ocean. In the Varaha Purana it is particularised as a place of pilgrimage. A deep tank is mentioned at its foot to the south, as also one on the summit, as also the Sapta-dhara and the Pancha dhara at its foot, there is mention also of a cave on its west side, which I could neither see nor hear of. It is also mentioned in Nepalese Buddhist literature, (Rajendra's Nepalese Literature) in a manner, showing that in Asoka's time, it was the seat of learned Jainas and incidentally the passage bears out in a remarkable manner Mr. Thomas' supposition, that Asoka professed the Jain religion, at least in the earlier part of his reign, after his conversion from brahmanism.

"Objects Nos. 12, 13 and 14 are at Kahalgaon. Kahalgaon, which is noticed in much detail by Cunningham (Vol. IV) appears to me to be the place of Sacred Tirath mentioned in the Mahabharata (the rock-cut Temple, object No. 13, is mentioned by Hiouen Thsang). And the form and sculpture of the rock cut Temple would place it in the earlier Gupta period, consequently the place where it stands must early have been a place of religious worship. It is still a place of worship, not only to the Muhammadans, who have a Darga (object No. 14) on the level platform higher up, on that same island, but by the lower class Hindus who make offerings to the twin divinities Haji and Hajman, who are supposed to reside on, or in, the larger and the smaller rock in the river, at that place.

"As the Mahabharata distinctly mentions one Sacred bathing place in Champa, and I am not aware of any other sacred place in the river, (for Jahangira, the only other possible place, has been shown to have become so subsequent to the Mahabharata and even to Hiouen Thsang) I have no option but to identify this place, which was certainly a place of some sanctity at the time of the Guptas, has been so all along and is now 'as attested by the offerings made to Haji and Hajman and the Pir's Dargah' with the Tirtha of Champa, and in that case I would identify the Gangal Dei Hill, with a temple on the top, a little to the East of Kahalgaon (presently to be noticed) with the Daudaparna mentioned in the extracts from the Mahabharata. — particularly allude to the vast lake like expanse in which the river Ganges is as it were lost here, because I conceive it was here and not at Jahangira, that the holy spot was, where Jahnu-muni performed austerities, and this may also be the vast and holy lake into which the Ganges is said to flow in the Mahabharata —but this is pure speculation. About 5 miles downstream from Kahalgaon is Patharghatta, object No. 15 of the Bengal list. The place is noticed by various travellers, but Bishop Heber is the only one who gives some description of the remains there. (Vol. I, pages 264 to 268) "

\* The Manu Samhita, Chapter 10, verse 3

The historian Mr. R. Montgomery Martin, in his "Indian Empire," mentions that the dress of the people of Bengal was the ancient form of that of the Aryans as described by Arrian.

"The dress, as described by Arrian, was precisely the two wrappers of cotton cloth, still worn by the people of Bengal and by strict Brahmans everywhere "

Further he makes an interesting allusion to the kings of Orissa, *e.g.*, Yayati Kesari and Ganga and Surjya Vamsa.

"The history of Orissa, like all others in the Deccan, begins with princes mentioned in the Mahabharata, describes in a very confused manner the successive occupation of the country by Vicramaditya and Salivahana, and the repeated invasions of Yavans from Delhi, from a country called Babul (supposed to mean Persia), from Cashmere and from Sindh, between the sixth century before, and the fourth after Christ "

He also thinks that the Epic is an important source of history of Ancient India

"Our present information divides itself into two classes, and comes either through the channel of poetry, that is, of history travestied into fable, or else through the medium of Brahmin or Buddhist priests it must consequently be well searched and sifted before it can be relied on as unbiassed by political motive or sectarian prejudice "†

The learned Vincent Smith says —

"The political history of India begins for an orthodox Hindu more than three thousand years before the Christian era with the famous war waged on the banks of the Jumna, between the sons of Kuru and the sons of Pandu, as related in the vast Epic known as the Mahabharata (The epoch of the Kaliyuga, 3102 B C, is usually identified with the era of Yudhishthira, and the date of the Mahabharata war) But certain astronomers date the war more than six centuries later (Cunningham, Indian Eras, pp 613) See Fleet, J R A S, 1911, p. 675; and R. Shamasastry, Gavam Ayana (Mysore, 1903) But the modern critic fails to find sober history in bardic tales, and is constrained to travel down the stream of time much farther before he comes to an anchorage of solid fact In order to be available for the purpose of history, events must be susceptible of arrangement in definite chronological order, and capable of being dated approximately, if not exactly. Facts to which dates cannot be assigned, although they may be invaluable for the purpose of ethnology, philology, and other sciences, are of no use to the historian "‡

Philosophy is a branch of Hindu religion as the problems of practical questions of spiritual life naturally raise the questions of self-discipline, sacrifice, charity and the contemplation of God Besides, the compatibility of evil with the goodness of God and the unequal distribution of joy and misery in life are the intellectual problems of religion. The fact is that the development of mind and spirit is traced in the theory of creation. From the early period of Vedas and Brahmanas the spirit of God, manifested in the stupendous phenomena of visible creation, was represented by seven apostles Those the world feared and admired

\* Mr. R. Montgomery Martin's "Indian Empire," page 47

† Mr R. Montgomery Martin's "Indian Empire," page 43

‡ Mr V. A. Smith's "Early History of India" page 28 with note.

became heroes, till at last what they reasoned became God absolute, Narayana. Thus Ancient India constructed a system of belief and worship for the general body of men according to their abilities and culture. There were seven schools of philosophy, Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta, Naiya, Vaicsehuika and Charvaka by Kapila, Patanjali, Vyasa, Goutama, Kanada and Charvaka, respectively. The last, Charvaka, being the conventional Epicurean theory, is not considered worthy of being called a philosophy in the Higher Hindu school of thought. He was killed after the Great War of Kurukshetra and was the reputed adviser of Duryodhana.

The main aim of the great Epic seems to be that the ideal monarchs of self-restraint, like Sudersana and Yudhishthira, ascended to Heaven in person as the great sages Narada and others did in days of yore. The emancipation of the soul was not then a question of a chain of births dependent on the merits of works or its absorption into the primordial essence of the Universe. For the cultured class the literature of Ancient India came into being. Vedic language was found unsuitable for the advancement of general culture and knowledge, and the perfected speech "Sanskrit" in poetry was thought to be the most convenient for learning the lessons by heart.

Valmiki is said to have been the pioneer in this respect, and he taught young children first to recite his compositions to musical accompaniments, thus attracting the admiration of the assembly, for the learned discourses of the educated and cultured sages could not be understood or be attractive. The dry subjects of philosophy, with which the great Epic Mahabharata dealt in the midst of other things, were found not so interesting to the mass as the Kavya form of literature with the amusing deeds of Hanuman to enliven the assembly by showing the wonderful possibilities of beastly power when combined with divinity. The Jattras of Bengal, even up to the last decade, observed this to amuse the audience in the pantomime of Hanuman.

The Vedic poets were astrologers and astronomers, as the observation of their sacrifices depended on the phases of the moon. In the Taittiriya Aranyaka of Vyasa mention of the planets is made for the first time. The laws of Manu were silent about them, but their worship is included in the later code of Yajnavalkya. These were at first seven with the seven sages, but became nine in consonance with the digits of mathematics. It is admitted that the development of Algebra, Arithmetic and Astronomy owed their origin to Ancient India. Medical science was much respected and was ranked with the Vedas as Upveda or a supplementary revelation under the tables of Ayurveda. The Epic Mahabharata, treating as it does with everything worth knowing, was



how the aboriginal race of India were displaced from Bengal and lived in Khandava Prastha, and when they were displaced by the Landavas, went to the North-West Frontier, where Alexander found them, and elsewhere

"Starting from the West, Alexander the Great found Rawal Pindi District in the hands of the Takkas or Takshaka, from whom its Greek name of Taxila was derived. This people has been traced to a Scythian migration about the 6th century B.C., (such dates have no pretension to be anything more than intelligent conjectures based on very inadequate evidence. With regard to the Takshaka, see Colonel Tod and the authorities which he quotes, *Rajasthan*, Vol. 1 p. 53 *passim*, pp. 93 *et seq.* (Madras Reprint 1873). Their settlements in the 4th century B.C. seem to have extended from the Paropamisian range (where Alexander found them as the Parne Takka pahar or Illi Takka (?) in Afghanistan to deep into Northern India. Their Punjab Capital, Takshasila, or Taxila, was the largest city which Alexander met with between the Indus and the *Jhelum* (327 B.C.) (Arrian. The Brahman mythologists, of course produce an Aryan pedigree for so important a person as King Taksha, and make him the son of Bharata and nephew of Ram Chandra) Sahasrana, from whom the Saka or Scythian era took its commencement (78 A.D.), is held by some authorities to have been of Takshak descent (Tod, *Rajasthan* Vol. 1 p. 95 (ed. 1873). In the 7th Century A.D., Takl (Takl, or Asnur, 45 miles West of Lahore General Cunningham, *Anc. Geog. of India*, p. 161, and Map vi (ed. 1871). This Takl lies, however, considerably to the South East of the Takshasila of Alexander's expedition), perhaps derived from the same race, was the Capital of the Punjab. The Scythic Takshaka indeed, are supposed to have been the source of the great Serpent Race the Takshakas or Nagas, who figure so prominently in Sanskrit literature and art, and whose name is still borne by Naga tribes of our own day. The Takhas remaining to the present time are found only in the Districts of Dehli and Karnal. They number about 15,000, of whom three fourths have adopted the faith of Islam.

"The words Naga and Takshaka in Sanskrit both mean a 'snake', or tailed monster. As the Takshakas have been questionably connected with the Scythian Takkas, so the Nagas have been derived by conjecture in the absence of evidence, from the Tartar patriarch Ngas, the second son of Ilkhan (Tod, *Rajasthan*, Vol. 1 p. 53 (ed. 1873), a very doubtful authority). Both the terms, Nagas and Takshakas, seem to have been loosely applied by the Sanskrit writers to a variety of non Aryan peoples in India, whose religion was of an anti Aryan type. We learn, for example, how the five Pandava brethren of the Mahabharata burned out the Snake-king Takshaka from his primeval Khandava Forest. The Takshakas and Nagas were the Tree and Serpent worshippers, whose rites and objects of adoration have impressed themselves deeply on the architecture and sculpture of India. They probably included in a confused manner, several different races of Scythic origin. The chief authority on Tree and Serpent worship in India selected the term 'Scythian' for the anti Aryan elements, which entered so largely into the Indian religions both ancient and modern (Dr J. Ferguson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, pp. 71, 72 (India Museum 410, 1868). For the results of more recent local research, see Mr Rivett-Carnac's papers in the *Journal of the As. Soc., Bengal* 'The Snake Symbol in India', *Ancient Sculpturings on Rocks*, 'Stone Carvings at Mainpuri', etc., the Honourable Rao Sahib Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik's 'Serpent-worship in Western India', and other essays in the *Bombay As. Soc. Journal*, also, *Reports of Archaeological Survey, Western India*.)"

The Mahabharata mentions Takshasila as the capital of Janmejaya. It is evident from this that the colonisation took place from Indraprastha (Delhi) to Takshasila. The great Epic and archaeological and other surveys testify to this. European scholarship has traced it differently. The enormous growth of colonisation is not only a very important question of migration, but has a great bearing on the question of the home of the ancient Hindus, where the Vedas developed and grew and trade flourished. If the Aryan race had entered India from the Himalayas then that would have been the trade route, but it was not. The home of shipbuilding was Bengal, and the ships of Bengal were famous from time immemorial, and the Europeans and other traders came to Srirang for trade before the first century of Christ. The birthplace of Vyasa is said to be in an island and for that his name is Dvaipayana. He was of black complexion and that was why another adjective was added, so he was called Krishna Dvaipayana and there is a shrine in the island famous for the birth of the great author Vyasa, 263 miles from Calcutta. Every Bengali Almanac gives the description of the place, i.e., the island is surrounded by three rivers Brahmana, Samkhya and Koel, 5 miles from the B. N. Railway Station, Rowkela.

The Bengali almanac more than the other Indian almanacs, is following the old Hindu system of giving all necessary information within a brief compass, not only about the daily chart of the dispositions of constellations and planets to help the observance of daily and periodical worship, but all necessary information for pilgrimages to sacred shrines for acquiring religious merit. There not only the birthplace of Vyasa is given but also several shrines in the Himalayas are mentioned where Vyasa performed religious austerities. Patanjali is said to have performed his Yoga austerities in a village of Patan, ten miles north of Memari station in the district of Burdwan in Bengal, and people worship a Siva named after him. There is also an image of Narayan in a village called Pandu-Kesava, twelve miles from Badarikasrama. It is said to have been brought by Arjuna from Heaven and established there. Eleven miles from Cawnpore a Siva bearing the name of Valmiki is worshipped, and the place of Valmiki's residence is ascribed to a hill in Jhansi, Manikpur Branch Line of the G. I. P. Railway, 5 miles north of Bahulpur station.

There is a Vyasa cave in a mountain two miles from Bilaspur station, from which there was a tunnel to the place of residence of Markendeya, a sage, seven miles from it. This is now closed up with a stone. The place of residence of the illustrious royal sage Visvamitra is a place called Chantravala (power of morality) near Buxar station, where a Siva called Ramesvar was worshipped. Kapila performed

religious austerities in Haridwar, named after him. The birthplace of Sita is ascribed to Janakpura, within 60 miles of Mokameh station. In Monghyr there is the famous Sitakunda, whose mineral water is sold far and wide, and near it the famous king Jarasandha is lying. Rishyasringa's place of residence is in Bhagulpore, a few miles from Mokameh Ghat station. The famous Karna's place is ascribed to Karnagarh, in Midnapore, Bengal, where the ruins of a big temple are lying. The birthplace of the sage Kasyapa and that of the progenitor of the Solar line are said to be at different places in Kashmir. There is a Khandaba Forest in the Bombay Presidency 196 miles from Jubbulpore where small temples are found.

Traditions in the sacred shrines establish, to a great extent, the missing links of the ancient history of India. Bengal and Kashmir seemed to be the north and south poles of ancient civilisation. Those who followed the path of absolute renunciation went from Bengal and Behar to the Himalayas to practise religious austerities. Bengal and Behar may claim justly to be regarded as the most ancient centre of civilisation, where independence of thought and action was allowed, for from that place many great men were born like Vyasa, Budha, Gourangya and Kalidasa.

In those days the Brahmans could not be punished and tyrants could do anything they liked. What cannot be cured must be endured, was the ruling maxim. Bengal stood against it and the institutes of Manu and Yajnavalkya looked down upon such a country and the Brahmans were at the root of it, as Bengal had the moral courage to disown them. Raghunandan and Gauranga established the predominance of Bengal in the religious world and the Naya philosophy of Navadvipa governed the other schools and soon became so famous that students from all parts of India flocked there. At Benares, the ancient seat of learning, Bengalis usurped the Naya seat and are there even now. The black Bengali Vyasa or Krishna Dwaipayana, became Padarayan Vyasa at Badrikasrama. He too established his place of residence at Benares and established the image Adikesava, but the evil inclination due to Kali-Juga predominated in the end. The place where he resided was called Vyasa-Kasi, the abhorred place of the Saivas.

There was no custom in civilised India which could permit of the curious situation of five husbands to one wife or the Niyoga system in the first three castes of the Indo Aryan family. Briggs in the introduction to his translation of Ferishta (p. 1 xiii) says —

"Some of the Hindus assert that the tribes of Brahmin and Kshatriya (Kshatriya) existed from time immemorial, but that the Rajputs are a modern tribe, only known since the beginning of the Kuljoog (Calcutta, A. M. 3215). The rajahs not satisfied

with their married wives, had frequently children by their female slaves, who, although not legitimate successors to the throne, were styled Rajputs, or the children of the rajahs.\*

Yajutsa was the only son of Dhritarastra by a Vaisya wife, who survived the Great War and went over to the side of the Pandavas before the war, and Dasratha too had a son by a Vaisya wife. It is evident the inter-marriages between Kshatriya and Vaisya gave the children the name of Kshetry in India for they combined in them trading faculties with legitimate ambitions of easy, princely habits of life and enjoyment. The quotations of independent European historians of note prove beyond doubt the important connection of the Indian Epics with Bengal, Behar and Orissa in the past. The Mahabharata furnishes important links and close relationship with the king of Kalinga. Chitrangada, king of Kalinga, must have been a powerful Kshatriya, whose daughter was won by Karna for Duryodhana at the Svayambara ceremony of marriage †

"According to the Mahavamsa, the mother of Vijaya, the conqueror of Ceylon, was a princess of Bengal, but her mother was a princess of Kalinga, whence she had been banished on account of her immorality and went with a caravan of merchants, going to Magadha. On the way, while going through the country of Ladda (Modern Radha or Western Bengal) the party was scattered by the attack of a lion which captured the princess and became the father of Simhabahu or Sihabahu, the father of Vijaya. This Simhabahu was permitted, for killing his father, i.e., the lion, to clear the forest and found the kingdom of Northern Kalinga, the capital of which was Simhapura. It is quite probable that the village of Singur in the Hooghly district of South-Western Bengal is identical with Simhapura, the now capital of Northern Kalinga." ‡

In the great battle the army of Kalinga followed the lead of Bhagadatta, king of Kamrupa, and in the famous formation of Drona, which cost Abhimanyu's life, the said army was placed at its neck. Srutayas, the king of Kalinga, was said to have protected Jayadratha from the attacks of Bhuma and Arjuna. Jarasandha was a well-known and powerful king of the Mahabharata. Buchanan's Statistics, Vol. II, furnish important clues to the places of the Epic occurrences.—

\* Major Wilford says that Sagala is another ancient name of Mungger, but I do not know on what authority, and such of the Pandits, as well as vulgar of the place, as I have consulted, are totally ignorant of the name. The remains of antiquity, which according to tradition goes farthest back, is on a hill called Nauyagarhi, south east about four miles from Mungger. It is said to have been the prison where Jarasandha, king of Magadha, had confined 80,000 of the princes of India, whom in pursuit of universal monarchy he had taken prisoners, and intended to sacrifice to the gods, but fortunately he was killed by Bhishm, the brother of Yudhishthira who afterwards contested the sovereignty of India with his kinsman Duryodhana" § "Major Wilford seems to have been able to find some authority, for considering Rajmahal as a

\* Mr R. Montgomery Martin's "The Indian Empire" page 42 (footnote)

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter IV

‡ R. D. Banerjee's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, page 49

§ Buchanan's Statistics, pages 45-46 Vol. II



place of note in great antiquity, and says, (Asiatick Researches, Vol. 9, page 34) that Balaram, the brother of Krichna, after his wars with Banasur, whose residence is still shown near Puraniya (Purneah) built Rajagriha or Rajamahai, on the banks of the Ganges, which must not be confounded with Patna, the Rajagriha of Jarasandha. I presume therefore that Major Wilford means our Rajmahal, which in fact is at no great distance from the city of Banasur, that I have described in my account of Dinajpur and near Puraniya I have not been able to trace any work attributed to that hero.\* "Where Major Rennell places Phatuka is Shumushpur Jafurabad, a town with 300 houses and some considerable religious edifices. It may be considered as a suburb of Phatuka. Baikanthapur is a town at least as large as Phatuka, but has not so many good houses, is rather in a state of decay, and is chiefly inhabited by weavers. Baikanthapur is a remarkable place of worship. The mother of Man Singha died at this place, and, where she was burned, a Baradwari, or Hall with 12 doors, was built by her son and several temples were at the same time endowed. On this occasion the Governor was favoured with a dream, in which he was informed of the place in the river, where Jarasandha had one day thrown an amulet (Yantra), that he usually wore on his arm, and such dreams being always true, the amulet was found. It is a stone representing a Lingga adorned with four human heads. It is alleged, that at the Sivaratri 200 000 people assemble."†

"The most remarkable place of Hindu worship is in a small marshy lake at the old seat of the Tharus called Gurgang. It is said to be mentioned in the Ramayana of Valmiki that Dasarath the father of Rama while living in wait for game near a river, shot Sravan the son of Andhak Muni mistaking him for a deer or wild beast. Andhak, although a Muni passing his time in silent contemplation of divine things, was of low degree but being very holy, and withal rather irascible, he cursed the king of Ayodhya, who had killed his son, and in consequence Rama and Lakshman, the king's sons, passed 14 years in the woods, where they had many troubles. About 10 years ago it was somehow discovered, that in the Tharus old lake called Gandar Jhal in the vulgar language, there is a deep pool, and that it was there that Dasarath killed Sravan. It has also been discovered, that this had been [the place where Gandharba, another silent contemplator was wont to pray. On the 6 accounts about 500 people assemble to bathe in the pool on the new moon in Magh. The claim to Gandharba Muni may be very good but in the legend of Valmiki, there is a strong circumstance mentioned against this being the place where Sravan was killed, for it is there stated, that the unfortunate affair took place on the Tamasa, a river, which passes Azemgar, and is called Tangus (Tonse River) in the language of men."‡

"The Raja of Mahauli says that he is of the same family with the Jayanagar Raja, descended of Bharata, the brother of Ramachandra. This prince after Rama assumed the Government of Ayodhya, went to assist Yuddhajit, his mother's brother, king of Kekaya against the Gandharbas who had invaded the country. Having expelled these he built two cities, of which one was Srinagar, and left there his two sons, Taksha and Puskal. According to the Desmala of the Saktisanggam Tantra, Kokaya is situated between the Brahmaputra River and Kamrup, that is to say it is the country we call Bhootan, which, in Sangakrita, is otherwise called Salya, but I am told, that Valmiki considers Kekaya as the same with Kasmira. However such discordancies may be reconciled, many pretend that Srinagar, near the source of the Ganges, is the city built by Bharata, and that the Snryabangais of Mahauli, came from Kumau, in that vicinity."

\* Buchanan's Statistics Vol. II, page 67

† Buchanan's Statistics, pages 44-45, Vol. I

‡ Buchanan's Statistics, p. 386, Vol. II.

The origin of the name of Magadha, as given in the Purans, bears out the significant fact in the Astika Parva of the Mahabharata that Garuda disgorged a Brahman and his Sudra wife.

"In the Ayodhyakanda, of the Skandha Puran, although supposed to have been written by Vyasa, who also composed the Samba Puran, a totally different account is given. It is there stated that Dasaratha Raja, the father of Rama, who flourished in the silver age (Tretayug) many thousand centuries before Samba, brought these Brahmans from Sakadvip to a great feast, where many Munis and persons of the sacred order were assembled. After the feast, the Brahmans of Saka were loaded with presents and sent home. This same book mentions that a certain Gaya, who had been king of the whole world within the seas for 6,000 years, gave great offence to Suryya, by applying to the Brahmans who studied the Vedas, and for neglecting the Brahmans of Suryya. On this account the king and all his Brahmanas were afflicted with the leprosy and were told by Suryya, that they could only be cured by drinking the water in which his Brahmans, the Sakadvipis, had washed their feet. On this account, the king and his Brahmans went to the banks of the milky sea, and were cured. Krishna afterwards brought 18 families into Jambudwip, in order to cure his son Samba of the leprosy. When the cure had been performed, these Brahmanas, called Magas, wished to return to their own country, but Krishna, Narad and others were very desirous for them to stay, and having persuaded them, Krishna prayed to the Magas and sent them to Magadha, to which they were conducted by Samba, and placed at Sambakhyagram, north from Giribhaja (Giriyak), where he resided. Although Samba thus lived close to the capital of the Brihadrathas, then the chief kings of India, he is said in this book to have been the great king, but there is still another circumstance more troublesome to reconcile with anything like history."

There are thirty Kashmiri learned Brahmanas families in Behar quite distinct from the other Brahmanas † Uparichara Basu, the ancestor of the famous king Jarasandha, with whom the story of the great Epic begins, lived in Magadha (pp 29 "Martin's Eastern India", Vol I). The place Ekchackra is identified with Arah.

"The name Arah is said by the Pandits of the place to be properly Ara, and to be a corruption of Aranya, which in the Sangskrita signifies a waste. This name was given by the five sons of Pandu, the place then being a forest, where they performed several great works. In particular the Pandits allege, that it was here where the five brothers married Dranpadi. Such marriages are now totally illegal, nor could any one of these chiefs have now married this lady, as she was of the same family with themselves in the male line. This is only curious as it shows that the Hindu Law has in modern times undergone great changes in other matters, as well as in the introduction of caste. It must be, however, observed, that this custom of several brothers having a common wife is still very prevalent among the Buddhists of Tibet. The Pandit of the survey doubts very much of Ara having been the scene of this marriage, and the derivation of the name from the Sangskrita seems exceedingly doubtful. In Persian the name is written Arah. The place is said to be also called Ekachakra, implying the people to live in unanimity, a virtue for which at present they have by no means the credit ‡

\* Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 153, Vol. I

† Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 156, Vol. I.

‡ Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 413, Vol. I

"The principal remain of antiquity in this division is Rautagar, which as I have said, derives its name from the young prince Rohitassa, the son of Harischandra a king of the family of the sun in the most remote periods of Hindu legend. Whether or not Rohitassa resided there, may be doubted; but his image, there can be little doubt, continued to be worshipped in the fortress until destroyed by the zeal of Aurangzeb. Such, at least, is the general tradition and all the circumstances are highly probable."

"Among the orthodox Hindus, Buddha is not considered as synonymous with Bhagawan a deity or Muni a saint but is always talked of as one personage, an incarnation of Vishnu and in an inscription found at Buddha Gaya, of which a translation has been published in the Asiatic Researches (Vol I p 231) this is fully stated. It is there mentioned by the author of the inscription that Buddha the incarnation of a part of Vishnu, and the same with Hari appeared at the commencement of the Kaliyug in a wild and dreadful forest, and that Amr, one of the nine Jewels of the Court of Vikramaditya, having discovered this place of the supreme being in the forest, caused an image to be made, and a holy temple to be constructed, and therein were set up the divine foot of Vishnu the images of the Pandus, of Brahma, and the rest of the divinities. This place according to the inscription, is called Buddha Gaya, and the fore fathers of him who shall perform the ceremony of the Sriddha at this place, shall obtain salvation, as is mentioned in the Vayu Puran."

Gaya is one of the oldest and the most respected shrines of Hindus in India. It is held in very great esteem by literate and illiterate alike, even now.

"The chief place of worship among the Hindus is on the Paagchane river, where it passes between the hill called Giribraja and the former abode of Jarasandha. About 5,000 people are said to bathe there on the Purnama of Kartik. West from Giriyak, on the south side of the above mentioned ridge near its centre are five springs, four of them hot, and dedicated to worship. At these springs, on the Tiluga Sangkranti, from 8 to 10,000 people assemble to bathe, and the Rajagriha Brahmins have the small profits that accrue. These springs are situated in a row parallel to the hill, and are collectively called Tapohan."

"It must be observed, that on the west extremity of the hill, towards the plain where Jarasandha is said to have been killed, and from whence there is an opening to what is most peculiarly called Rajagriha, there is a road ascending the hill exactly similar to that at the east end, and I have no doubt, that it reaches this temple, and could have served no other purpose, but as opening a communication with it, although by the natives it is considered as the remains of a fortification. In this I have no doubt, that they are entirely mistaken. The only image that I saw near the temple, was a small one exceedingly decayed, which was found in the bottom of the tank. It represents a four-armed female with a child on her knee."

"The idea of Jarasandha's house having been seated on the hill Giribraja, so generally believed in the country, seems to derive its origin from a verse in the Bhagwat, which mentions that Krishna, Bima and Arjun disguised as mendicants went to Giribraja, where was the son of Brihadratha (Jarasandha), and at the time when mendicants were usually admitted, they went into the palace, and saw the king."

\* Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India) page 432 Vol I

† Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), pages 69-70 Vol I

‡ I bid page 78, Vol I

§ I bid page 80, Vol I

¶ I bid page 81, Vol I

"There are caves, one of them assigned to the Lomas or Romas, the reciters of the Mahabharata, and the other to Karua, one of the heroes who was said to have practised asceticism (pp 104 ibid)'

Regarding the colonisation of the different parts of India the European Historian Martin's views will be found interesting —

"Swayambhuwa, the founder of the kingdom of Vithora, by the whole of what is called the golden age (Satya Yug), preceded Vairwaswata, the founder of the kingdom of Kosala and the latter was the great grandson of Marichi, while Budha who founded the adjacent kingdom of Kuru, and reigned at Pratisthan, opposite to Prayag, about the same time with Vairwaswata whose daughter he married, was the grandson of Atri. I look upon these Brahmadikas, therefore, as the leaders of a colony, which at the end of the golden age, settled in India, and assumed the name of Brahmans, as being farther advanced in the arts than the descendants of Swayambhuwa its more early princes. I look upon it also as probable, that these personages came from Western Asia, introducing with them the Sangskrita language, generally admitted to be radically the same with the Persian dialect, while the languages spoken among all the rude tribes that inhabit the fastnesses of India, and which are probably remains of its ancient tongue, have no sort of analogy to the languages of the west. In the history of Kashmira, preserved by Abul Fazil, Kaeyapa, who was the son of Marichi, is said to have introduced the Brahmans (that is, a colony of civilized men) into that country, and the traditions of Behar State, that he there founded a city of which I was shown some of the remains. These no doubt were of much later date than the time of Kasyapa, although he may have been the founder of the city to which they once belonged. One of the sons of Kasyapa, named Vivaswa, is supposed to be now the deity presiding over the sun, owing probably to his having introduced from Persia the worship of that luminary, and, from flattery, his descendants were usually called the family of the sun (Surya-bangsa). His son Vairwaswata, who, in a former transmigration, had been Satya-brata (perhaps Noah), founded the kingdom of Kosala, long one of the most powerful in India, and built the city of Kosalapuri, or Ayodhya.\*

"Buddha was born about 1386 years before Christ, he being the son-in-law of Vairwaswata, it is probable that this prince may have been born about the year 1399, and we may allow him to have been 33 years old when he founded Ayodhya, and the kingdom of Kosala. In the genealogies may be found several different lists of his successors, who are commonly supposed by Pandits to have succeeded each other from father to son by right of primogeniture, nor did one prince fail to leave his kingdom to his eldest son for many generations (Asiatic Researches, Vol 2, p 130). This, however, seems to be a mere supposition taken for granted, because in some of the genealogies the names follow each other without any remark, for the direct line failed in Amharisha, and went to the descendants of his brother, and Bharata usurped the Government for 14 years from his elder brother Rama" †

Paleolithic implements found in Orissa and the delta of Bengal with the account of Sagar, king of the Solar dynasty, and ancient remains and traditions connected with the Pouranic and Epic accounts, give clear indications that the early ancient home and the Indian colonisation of Aryans took place on the seashore of Bengal and Orissa. The theory of Noah's Ark, and Mandar hill being the churning staff to

\* Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), pages 330-331, Vol. II

† Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 331, Vol. II

skim the ocean to bring out the ambrosia of life bears this out Bengal has been famous for shipbuilding and trading in India

The bare outlines of the idol figures of gods like Kali of Kalighat, Jagannath, Subhadra and Balaram of Puri point to the age of the art when it was in its infancy, and there is the well-known tradition and squib at Visvakarma, to whom the workmanship of the wooden figures of Jagannath, etc., are ascribed, and the author's name is identified with the name of the king of heaven, Indra (Indradyumna) The name Indradyumna implies that he has wealth like the king Indra He was said to have descended from the Solar dynasty of kings Puranic account connects Jagannath with Narayana and Narada, and what is more, the very nim tree on whose bough Krishna lost his life by being shot by an arrow, was said to have been curved out for the very first figures of the gods which have been renewed every twelfth year since then Thus the Epic connection is also established.

The popularity of Puri and its presiding deity, Jagannath, seems to precede the Buddhistic age The disposition of the three gods and their mutual relationship established their connection with the sequel of the Mahabharata War—that the throne which went to the sons of Puru and Yadavas was again lost by the curse of Yajati upon his son Yadoo and eventually passed to Subhadra's grandson, Parikshit. What Bhagiratha did to his ancestors, the sons of Sagara, Krishna, Balaram and Subhadra did to their ancestors to release them from the curse of Yajati This is the system of deliverance by Pitriyajna, which system the Mahabharata elucidates. In Tritha-Jatra Parva, Chapter CXIV, in Kalinga Baitarani, the Pandavas with Draupadi offered oblations to their manes and the sacrifice of Visvamitra took place. It can be justly inferred that Daksha Yajna was performed there. For ready reference the translation of the chapter is given It speaks for itself—

“Vaishampayana said —O Janmejaya, thereupon the Pandavas started from the kousiki and went, one after the other, to all the sacred shrines O king, going to the sea where the Ganges mingles with it, he performed the sacred ceremony of a plunge in the centre of the five hundred rivers O descendant of Bharata, that ruler of earth, the hero, accompanied by his brothers then went along the shore of the ocean to the land of the halingas Lomasha said.—O son of Kunti, this is Kalinga where flows the river Vaitarani, where (on the banks of which) Dharma performed sacrifices under the protection of the celestials This is the northern bank (of the Vaitarani) always frequented by the Brahmanas, inhabited by the Rishis, suitable for performing sacrifices and adorned with a hill It rivals the path by which a virtuous man fit for going to heaven goes to the celestial region In the days of Yore, the Rishis performed sacrifices at this spot O king of kings, here at this spot Rudra seized the sacrificial beast O king of kings, he then exclaimed. ‘This is my share O best of the Bharata race, the (sacrificial) beasts being thus taken away, the celestials then thus spoke to him. “Do not cast covetuous eyes on the property of others Do not disregard all the righteous rules.” They then

addressed pleasing words of glorification to Rudra (Siva) They gratified him with a sacrifice and they offered him suitable honours Thereupon, giving up the beasts, he went away by the path trodden by the celestials O Yudhisthira, hear from me what then happened to Rudra The celestials from the fear of Rudra set apart for eternity the best portion of all shares (of a sacrifice) such as was fresh and not stale The man, who bathes at this spot and recites this ancient story, sees with his human eyes the path that leads to the celestial region

"Vaishampayana said —Thereupon all the highly exalted Pandavas with Draupadi descended to the Vaitarini and offered oblations to the Pitris. Yudhisthira said —O Lomasha, behold, how great is the merit of a pious act! Having bathed in this spot with proper form I seem no more to touch the world of men O vow-observing Rishi, through your grace I see all the regions This is the sound of the recitations (of the Vedas) by the high-souled Rishis Lomasha said —O Yudhisthira, O ruler of men, the place from which you hear this sound, is distant from here three hundred thousand Yojanas, keep quiet O king, this is the celestial forest of the self-create (Brahma) where, O king of kings, the powerful Vishwamitra performed his sacrifices In which sacrifices the self create (Brahma) gave away to the illustrious Kashyapa, as Dakshina, this earth with all its mountains, rivers and countries O son of Kunti, as soon as earth was given away, she became sad, and thus she spoke in anger to the exalted lord of the world 'O exalted one, you should not have given me away to any mortal Your this giving me away would come to nothing, for I am going down to the nether world' O Ruler of earth, seeing the earth sad and despondent, the exalted Rishi, Kashyapa, gratified her by a propitiatory act. O son of Pandu, thereupon the earth was gratified with his ascetism She again rose from the water and remained as a sacrificial altar O king, your door before us is the spot with the distinct form of that sacred altar O great king, ascending it, become great in prowess O king this is that sacred altar stretching as far as the sea, be blessed by ascending it, and of yourself across the sea. When you will ascend it to day, I shall perform the ceremony to avert all evils from you, for, O descendant of Ajamira, this altar here, as soon as it is touched by a mortal, goes down into the sea 'I bow to the God who protects the universe, I bow to the God who is beyond this universe O lord of gods, come near this salt sea The fire, the sun, the organ of generation water, the goddess, the seed of Vishnu, nectar and the navel of nectar The god of fire is the organ that generated you (ocean). The earth is your body Vishnu gave the seed that caused your being, You are the navel of nectar' O son of Pandu, you must recite the above words of truth, and as you recite you must quickly ascend this altar O Pandava, thus those words of truth must be audibly recited, and while thus reciting them one must plunge into this lord of rivers (ocean) O son of Kunti, O best of the Kurus, else this lord of waters of divine origin, this great ocean must not be touched even by the end of a Kusa (grass) Vaishampayana said —Thereupon when the ceremony to avert evils had been completed, the high-souled Yudhisthira went into the sea Having performed all that the Rishi (Lomasha) had ordered he went to the Mahendra (mountain) and spent the night there" \*

There is one significant fact above all to hold Bengal and Orissa as the place where the first creation of man took place, for the Mongolo-Dravidian type predominates there. The Santhals of Chhota Nagpur represent the Dravidian type and the central regions of India belong to the Aryo-Dravidian group It proves the theory that the early people had no fixed habitation. They went to Mongolia and Dravidia

their descendants returned to their home they formed the Mongolo-Dravidian group, and those Aryas who moved to Central India by inter-marriage formed the Arya Dravidian group. Along the ridges of the Himalayas the Mongolian type is represented by the Bodo of Assam, Garurigs of Nepal, Lopehirs of Sikkim and Darjeeling, and the Peytho-Dravidians are the Lura and the Coorgs of Western India, and from the valley of the Ganges to Ceylon the Dravidian type prevails. The pure Arya race in India can only be determined struggling for existence in the midst of the uncivilised people, the Asuras, who were heistly for their selfish ends as denounced in the first Sloka of Valmiki before he undertook to write the Ramayana.

The original fight seems to have started from the idea of race propagation and an easy method of life. To reign is worth everything was the idea of the Asuras, but the Devas or Aryas tried to find out by labour how one could live long with wisdom so that one's labour would not be lost to posterity. Thus is the ambrosia churned out of the ocean in the Puranas and the cause of the fight between the Devas and Asuras. The sages took both sides and were ultimately divided. The god Siva was worshipped by the Asuras.

An annual Fair takes place on the Sivaratni festival in Bhagulpur where there is a Siva called Srigeswar after the sage Rishyasringa, who lived in Singheswara, 24 miles from Raghupur Station on the B N Ry. Line, which starts from Semaria Ghat on the Ganges opposite Mokameh Ghat. One and a half miles from Mokameh there is a place where, it is said, Parasurama lived. The place of residence of the famous charitable Karna is ascribed to the place called Karna-Garah in Midnapure District, within Jhalabari Thana, where the remains of a big temple are found. All these shrines connected with local traditions cannot be spurious imaginations of men to make money. There is a story of the king Indradyumna told by Markendeya in the Mahabharata which connects Krishna with Jagannath of Puri, who was established by the king of that name, and its age is very very ancient.

“Vaishampayana said—The Rishis and the Pandavas again asked Markendeya,—‘Is there any who possesses longer life than you?’ He told them, Yes, there is a royal sage named Indraduman. His virtue being diminished, he fell from heaven crying, ‘My achievements are lost.’ He came to me and asked, ‘Do you know me?’ To him said I, ‘From our eager desire to acquire virtue we do not stay at one place. We live for one night only in one village or in one town. A man like us therefore cannot possibly know who you are. The fasts and vows that we are to observe make us weak in body, therefore we are unable to follow worldly pursuits to earn wealth.’ He said to me, ‘Is there anyone who possesses a longer life than you?’ I replied ‘There lives an owl named Prava-karna on the Himalayas. He is older than I. He may know you. That part of the Himalayas where he lives is far from this place.





Krishna and Vyasa The Ramayana, with Yogi-Vasistha and Adhyatma Ramayana, cannot be superior to the Mahabharata Yogi-Vasistha deals with Vedantic philosophy and Adhyatma Ramayana is said to have been composed by Vyasa in seven divisions of 4000 Slokas which deals with Karma, Bhakti, Dharma and politics and there is also Rama Gita It is not so popular as the Ramayana or the Mahabharata Vyasa explains the duties of man in different stages and spheres of activity in a methodical arrangement by examples He introduced in the Epic the system of examples being better than precepts for realisation of the intricacies of religion and truth European scholars compared Goutama with Aristotle, Kanada with Thales, Jaimini with Socrates, Kapila with Pythagoras, Patanjali with Zeno, and Vyasa with Plato The authority of Vyasa was unquestioned, as so many Puranas were ascribed to him The Indian Epics, however changed, comprised the most valuable part of ancient history and geography

The rosaries of Tulsi wood and berries called Rudraksha are used in counting prayers to Krishna and Siva, respectively, and the wooden gods were the most ancient emblems till figures of stone and metal came into vogue to combat the wear and tear of time Trees were worshipped from the very early times and Akshaya-Bata at Allahabad Fort and Bodhidruma of Gaya are well-known The images of Jagannath from Nim trees continue the old idea of Nature worship, which was the earliest form of worship It still lingers in the worship of Sasthi, the goddess of children, with the branches of Aswatha and Bata for the propagation of children

' In the Vizsgapatam district, a peculiar caste is the Gola, a pastoral caste like the Goalas of Bengal and the Gauras of Northern Orissa They are said to be descended from Krishna himself, and their social status is fairly high They are distributed all over the Tolngu country and contain many different subdivisions "

"The Vaishnavas are burnt and pay special reverence to Purushottama or Jagannatha of Puri "•

The oversea dominions of the Kalingas are given thus—

"Ka'inga had built up a great overseas empire and spread its colonies as far as the Philippine Islands in the East and far South into the Islands of the Indian Archipelago Very probably Chandragupta found out that it would not be possible for him to upset the power of Kalinga So it was left for his grandson, the great Asoka, to conquer Kalinga †

"The Kalingan origin of the earliest colonists from India does not depend merely on the term now applied to Indians in the Indian Archipelago, but also on definite archaeological and historical evidence During the reign of the Chola king, Rajendradeva Parakesarivaman, one of the younger sons of the great Chola conqueror,

\* Professor R D Banerji's "History of Orissa " Vol I, pages 25 26

† Professor R. D Banerji's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, page 62

Rajendra Chola I Gangaikondan, an expedition was sent to Ceylon some time before 17th August, 1035. This inscription is to be found in the Manimangalam or the Rajagopala Perumal temple in the Tanjore District. It is recorded that this army captured the king Vira-Salamegha (Vira-Salamegan) who was beheaded. There was, therefore, a king of Ceylon belonging to a Kalingan dynasty, which country had itself lost its independence long before that date. Further records of the colonisation of Further India and the Indian Archipelago by the people of Kalinga is to be found in the History of Burma and Siam.”\*

The discovery of coins in Mayurbhanja State with the legend in Greek script and the old Persian language bears testimony to the communications and trade relations.

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\* Professor R. D. Banerji's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, pages 94-95

# PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION OF LOVE.

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The very creation of the Universe is ascribed to the love of God Maya. It is the finding of ancient Hindu philosophy. Fancy charms men and women more than reality. All things on earth are immortal but the spirit of love. He dies who leaves no image behind, but he who does is immortal. The customs, manners, laws are like leaves on the tree which wither and grow—they have never been fixed and stationary but change with the time. The world is a beautiful book, but is of little use to those who are not taught to read it. Noble blood is an accident of birth, but noble actions characterise the great.

The Atharva Veda deals with the science of medicine and magic, etc., and the Angirasa family, who were the great exponents, were thus styled Atharva Angirasa. Divine love is represented in the art of healing and all the ancient sages practised it. The book of medicine and art of healing as a science became so important, that it received the name of Ayur Veda, the science of longevity, and occupied an equal if not higher place than the Ancient Indian Vedas. The fight between Devas and Asuras was the theme of the Bhārata Samhita, either for the possession of Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, or for the possession of the throne of Heaven between Indra and Vritra.

But the age in which the Mahabharata grew was not the time of the origin of civilisation, when rough passion contrasted favourably with the cold calculation of all sorts of considerations. The difference of the Indian Epic ideal of an ancient royal princess like Draupadi is realised if placed side by side with the Kalevala, the Finnish Epic, where a bride of gold and silver is forged by the Divine Smith for Wainamoinen, who was at first very pleased to have his wife such a wealthy girl, but soon found out that in spite of fires and furs, whenever he touched her she froze him. Draupadi was not so. She was the life and soul of the Pandavas. The Hindu creation is the work of Maya or love. The origin of love has exercised philosophers of Ancient India to connect it with the creation, and Adya-Sakti Uma, the consort of Siva, or Lakshmi of Narain, either of them is represented. Love at first is like a mirage, the relation of a previous existence. Deep affection is of slow growth and it is won by deep devotion. Love must arise from the heart and not by constraint. The poets sang of it, and it is as mysterious as ever, for it has no connection with flesh and blood. Love is the product of the highest

culture, in man and woman it is not usually the fruit of a marriage. Love gives an instinctive insight into the human heart and defies distance and the elements. When the five elements are exercised by Nature, then the creation takes place under Samkhya system of philosophy. The religion and philosophy of the Hindus have made love the stepping-stone to heaven, and Yudhisthira and Sudarsana, the two ancient kings, whom their wives could not disillusion from the path of rectitude, went to heaven in person.

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,  
And men below, and saints above,  
For love is heaven and heaven is love

"And if there be a human tear  
From passion's drop refined and clear,  
'Tis that which pious fathers shed  
Upon a dutious daughter's head "

(SCOTT)

The first symptom of love is timidity in a man and boldness in a girl. The two sexes have a tendency to approach and each assumes the qualities of the other. Love makes an alliance of friendship and animosity, it is passion if the latter is gross and sensual. The moral progress of the world depends on love. There is no service worthier than that which love renders. The remembrance of a beloved form, be it of man, woman or child, becomes a shadow to all the actions of a lover. The science of love is the philosophy of the heart, it is unconquerable.

Children are the gifts of God and love and sometimes they come to expose guilty love. Surely the great author Vyasa, Pandu and the Pandavas did not come to the world to expose guilty love as the dramatic author sought to expound without rhyme or reason. The exposition of the position of girls and marriage by the Sun to Kunti cannot but excite the laughter of any sane and sensible man. These are the worst interpolations and should not find a place in the great Epic.

"Surya said —O beautiful damsel of sweet smiles, neither your father, nor your mother, nor your superiors are competent to bestow you. May you be happy. Hear what I say. O damsel, the term Kanya, derived from the root Kama (to desire) is applied to a maiden, because she desires (to have intercourse with) everybody. Therefore, O fairhipped girl of excellent complexion, she is free (to act as she chooses) in this world. You will, O beauteous girl, on no account fall away from virtue (by satisfying my desire). How can I, who seek the welfare of everybody, commit an act of sin? O fair complexioned girl, it is the human nature that all men and women should be without restraint. And it is asserted that the contrary (condition) is (its) *perversion*. You will also remain a virgin even after having held intercourse with me and your son will be of mighty arms and high renown (*Mbh., Chapter CCCVI, Vana Parva, verses 12—16*)

That this was then quite against the custom was evident from the words of Kunti

"Valahampyana salli —Beholding him the maiden was covered with shame And being alarmed, the damsel spoke these words to Surya —' O lord of rays, go to your own place This outrage on your part is greatly distressing to me as I am a maiden Father, mother and other superiors only are competent to bestow my person I will not surrender my virtue In this world keeping their bodies (pure) is considered to be the highest duty on the part of women O deity possessed of the wealth of effulgence, in order to test the potency of the Mantras, I have, through mere childish curiosity, invoked you O God, you should pardon me, considering that it has been done by a mere girl " Kuntī said —O god, my father is alive and so also my mother and friends And since they are (still) living this violation of duty (on my part) is not allowable If, O God, I hold this unlawful intercourse with you, then the reputation of this race will be destroyed for my sake Or if you consider it a virtue I will then, O best of those that shed heat, gratify your desire even without being given away to you by my friends As O irrepressible one, the virtue, the reputation, the renown and the life of all embodied beings are established in you, may I remain chaste after having yielded my person to you "†

The appeal of Kuntī demonstrates beyond all doubt that woman remains ignorant of sexual knowledge until her marriage, and that is not disclosed by the Gods above. In the love stories of God the mythology of love is expressed. This is not so. The Hindu mythology of love is given in the love episode of Siva and Parvatī, which became the theme of the great Indian poet Kalidasa's 'Kumar Sambhava, the birth of Kartick', which the great Epic also describes ‡ That chastity and purity of life are virtues in woman the life devotion and sacrifice of Parvatī prove. They would thus be equal in the estimation of the barbarian and the civilised

Chastity owes its origin to the self-restraint and self-respect of a woman to preserve the tradition of the family to which she belongs It means the quality of virginity or continence and not consecration. The speech of Kuntī speaks for itself Could God be made miserable and revengeful by any human deeds or with the affairs of the world ? The lesson deduced in the Great War of Kurukshetra is nothing else but this, that death is better than a life of passion, vegetating only in ignorance through the cultivation of passion and avarice, fruitful of dire miseries and woes.

' Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !  
On whom these truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ,  
Thou, over whom thy immortality  
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave " "

(WORDSWORTH )

\*The Mbh., Chapter CCGV, Vana Parva, verses 22—24

†The Mbh., Chapter CCGVI Vana Parva, verses 8—11

‡Adi Parva, Chapter LXII, verse 34

The main source of strength, activity and happiness depends upon human love. Contentment is a state of negation, a sleepy kind of thing. Positive unhappiness drives people to action and negative unhappiness wastes their powers and blinds them to the beauty and the joy of life. Happiness is not enjoyment nor the desire for it; not a negative measure of shutting out, but a positive measure of taking in more and more. It is a state of activity and energy, the true complement of human vitality, which is the joy of effort leading to success and ever leading to new efforts, not actually fixed upon one desire and one person.

Man and woman are made to learn how to read and write, so it is in the case of love. The pleasures of the senses are the snares of the Devil. Love pleads again and again the worth and dignity of the senses. It is not the obscene jest of the music hall or love in the public print of a novel or the red rag to celibate ecclesiastics. Love is the food of the spirit of enjoyment. The first step seems to be to master all the beauty of the world through the five senses of enjoyment so that it can join spirit with spirit as body with body. That is the love which Krishna, as the father of the Hindu Cupid, preached in Brindaban by the example of Rashlila being absent in person but present in the heart of his lovers in spirit, in unison with the bright moon and stars above in the autumn.

In Hindu Philosophy it is essential to control the mind, as a horse is controlled by a rider, so that the senses cannot rule the mind. One who does not know how to ride is thrown off and kicked. This is as the fate of Duryodhana. An artist, who can master his material and is endowed with the technique of giving expression to his paintings, is a great master. He can correct human inclinations by his picture with the use of his brush. Pleasure seekers' distress in love painters depict in pictures while poets describe it in verses. They prove that the body is the gateway to the spirit within. It is the means of approach of human powers to realise what is detestable or beautiful, glorious or holy.

Love is not mere animal desire or sentimentality of the superiority of man and female subservience. Knowledge in action is quite different from that used on living. It is better to marry than to burn or freeze—that is the average old and false dichotomy of body and spirit. This is reflected in the marriage of Ruru and Pramadhara in the Pousya Parva of the great Epic. They found all the world more lovely because of each other and the one sacrificed half of his longevity for the return of life to the lover because the marriage did not then take place, the exaltation was not then over. There is nothing like real love for keep-

ing it alive and for revealing how little passion matters or public criticisms or ignominy. Poets make separations between lovers to demonstrate it.

For Nala and Damayanti, Rama and Sita, but in the case of Draupadi no such thing happened. They do not come to despise each other as soon as what brought them together has disappeared. Siva, the great God, tried to stifle love and was said to have burnt Cupid. He discovered his mistake, that the senses were the elements, not indeed of comfort, but of vital happiness, which open the glory of spiritual adventure. So long as he looked down upon love as self-surrender not as self-fulfilment, there was a fight between him and Narayana, which the *Bhārata Samhita* describes.

To love and to be wise is not possible when it is a question of passion, for the supreme happiness of life seems to have been the conviction that one is loved. Love when it is nursed through shame and sorrow must necessarily be holier and more sincere than when it is reared in pride and fostered in luxury. The soul of man and woman lives in love, which no age can freeze. Sometimes one does not actually understand what one loves, but lovers have an ineffable instinct to detect their rivals. In lovers' quarrels the party who loves most is always agreeable to admit the greater fault. A lover is no better than a hunter, for there is much the same pleasure in hunting the animal fit for the shaft of cupid in a glance of passion. Who ever loved that did not love at the very first sight? Love is thus represented in the arrow of Cupid at the sight of Venus, both in the East and the West.

The trident and axe were the weapons of the great God Siva and were called *Pinakani*. Love has material existence in the body and moral uplift in mind and spiritual union in the soul. The material world is the product of love, with the spirit presiding over such a love it is in the mind. Beasts produce a greater number of children than human beings. There is some mysterious cause behind it. Medical science has been trying to find out the cause of the secret of male and female children and sterility but has not yet been successful.

Children are not the fruits of passion. The ancient kings married hundreds of beautiful women yet they were not blessed with children, they had to seek the aid of the gods for children. Rama Chandra and his brothers were the fruits of sacrifice. Draupadi and her brothers also were. The Pandavas were no exception as Pandu went to the forest to obtain sons by religious merit. The attributes of the Pandavas relate to the gods who blessed them in response to the prayer of Pandu and his good wife Kunti. The connection between gods and men has

been spiritual and not material ever since the days of the Vedas. Poets may have license to do what they like, but that can never be a fact of history. Krishna is the emblem and hero of love but he was not a slave to woman or to earthly pleasures in the way Yajati, his ancestor, was described to be in the great Epic. He was not like Siva, who could bless men with children. The great Epic describes how Krishna had to seek the help of that God when one of Krishna's wives, Jamabati, wanted to be blessed with a son. Krishna was not connected with mundane affairs of love and its fruit, it is the function of Siva and his consort Parvati.

In the dramatic Mahabharata the two deities Sun and Indra were engaged to protect their children Karna and Arjuna. Krishna failed to bribe Karna with a kingdom by the disclosure that he was the son of Kunti. The fallacy of the argument was that he would ascend the throne of king Pandu the moment Yudhishthira would come to know of it, for Karna was alleged to have been conceived in the maidenhood of Kunti. If Karna could ascend the throne, if that was the custom, then Vyasa could have done so to the throne of Santanu, left vacant by the death of Vichitravirya. All these are interpolations of the worst nature, done to cry down the Pandavas and their family.

The Suta reciter made Karna one of their reared children, a greater hero than Arjuna of the Kshatriyas, as the Nishads made Eklavya. If Karna was really the child of Kunti there would not have been any ground for Parasurama to curse him. Besides, Karna was not a man to disclose to his friend Duryodhana what Krishna and Kunti disclosed to him and turned it to great use to avert the war. In other words, to secure inheritance to the throne without a blow. All these are stories to belittle the Pandavas, who were loved and admired by the Hindu public. They would have been idolised but for the followers of Krishna worship, who made Krishna the great philosophic Narayana.

The descendants of Arjuna made him Nara, the great friend of Narayana—the two separate entities given against the original connection of the Mahabharata or the Bharata Samhita. The Bhagavata tried to set it right by the preaching of the religion of love, enunciated by Krishna and his lovers in Rāshlīla. Purana mentions the example of Radha, the disappointed consort of Ayana, first conceiving the idea of spiritual love and connecting it with the ideal earthly lover Krishna. To her excited thought, her divine spouse became a living presence by the sound of a flute, the sight of the river Jamuna, or the voice of a cuckoo. She was lost in love, she went to prayer, agitated and tremu-



lous, and exclaimed in ecstasy "Let me die in your embrace, my love, do not chasteise in the way you are indulging Have you no pity on the torments I suffer? You seem to take pleasure in my ailing instead of removing it" These were not the expressions of Kunti to the Sun.

Then one could understand a grown-up girl's experience of love, and sometimes that love is converted into religious emotions and hallucination Nuns, it is said, used to be seized with religio-sexual frenzy (Francis Parkman's "The Jesuits in North America" describes it) Kunti is the bright example of chastity that the great Epic describes The constancy of Kunti mentioned in the table of contents in the great Epic is sought to be traduced with Karna's birth

"Vasava has fully described the greatness of the Kuru race virtues of Gandhari, the wisdom of Vidura and the constancy of Kunti He has also described the divinity of Vasudev (Krishna), the goodness of the Pandavas and the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra"

Again, in the Vaisampayana edition of the Epic, which Sauti recited, the main idea was not disturbed but the names of the Pandavas and the Kurus were mentioned without the names of the heroines What was said was only amplified —

"Duryodhana is a great tree created out of passion, Karna is its trunk Sakuni is its branches, Dushasana is its fruit and flowers and weak Dhritarastra is its root † Yudhishthira is a great tree created out of virtue and religion, Arjuna is its trunk Bhima is its branches two sons of Madri are its flowers and fruits, and Krishna, Brahma and Brahmanas are its roots ‡"

The introduction of the connection of Karna with Kunti as his mother is a clear contradiction of what is said in the table of contents and it cannot but be an interpolation

In the days of the Mahabharata the liberty of women and the tender emotions of enduring love were not kept private in the harems of palaces The enumeration of the incidents of the Ramayana in the Mahabharata and in the Bana Parva might be a case of clear interpolation of later days The illustrious, cultured ladies like Draupadi raised by their conduct the temples of chastity not in the body of the person of women but in their heart of hearts, the sanctuary of true love Women's dependence was not then written on everything Draupadi exacted respect not only from her beloved ones, but even from her enemies The possession of the Empire of Yudhishthira was found quite incomplete without the Queen Draupadi, and it was for this she was staked and

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\*Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 99-100

†108 verse

‡109 verse

the Dice Hall would have been converted into a field of battle but Yudhishthira did not like to recover the lost kingdom in such a mad brawl of fists and blows, as had actually taken place at the Swayambhara ceremony of Draupadi.

The dignity and position of the Pandavas were then quite different. If Yudhishthira had allowed it, the whole world would have laughed at him; that the brothers and cousins were fighting for the possession of Draupadi. He knew quite well that to test him all these things were done. He passed the ordeal unscathed and Dhritarastra had to come to his rescue by the conduct of Draupadi. Draupadi was not swayed by the cruel persecutions nor were the brothers of Yudhishthira, although Bhima showed signs of restlessness and was warned by Arjuna. What Lakshman and Hanuman were to Rama, Arjuna and Bhima were to Yudhishthira. Draupadi was a friend and relation of Krishna, and in fact he was the match-maker. Krishna was the ideal God of love, the heroic sister Subhadra was given to Arjuna, the glorious Draupadi went to Yudhishthira, and Krishna himself ruled the heart of all the maidens of Brindaban, and even when they were married they could not derive that pure delight which they experienced in their maidenhood in the exploits with Krishna. The Raslila of Brindaban, enacted during the bright moon and stars of the season, if it was purely a case of sensual pleasures, would easily have satisfied them with their husbands at home, but it was something more serious than that. Their hearts yearned after the union with the heart of Krishna, which the young playmates used to enjoy in their younger days. The wife cannot give the delight that beloved class mates excite in a meeting after a long interval of separation.

Passionate love destroyed Lanka (Ceylon) and Troy. When one is in its possession prudence bids adieu. The sigh of such a love is called the last of wisdom. Beauty of persons does not last long, like that of the mind, which is to be prized above all. The Indian Epics want to impress upon their readers that virtue is the right title of nobility and kingdom, and anyone, be he a king, who leads a base life, is a monster in nature. Esteem and affection are due to virtuous conduct, but when the tranquility and peace, and last, though not least, the religion of a kingdom are at stake any sacrifice to establish them is not too dear. Many a battle was fought for beauty of person in a woman and for her possession. The Ramayana was for Sita, but the Mahabharata was not so. The field of the great battle of Kurukshetra is described as the place where the fight for religion took place and the great incarnation of God was Krishna, who was not a wielder of arms or a fighting hero, but the charioteer of a hero, Arjuna, his brother-in-law.

The moral of the great Epic seems to have been that success follows virtue and Krishna. He was the great receptacle of love which in youth ignited the heart of the fair maidens of Brindaban, united in ties of marriage with thousands and thousands of Royal Princesses and who kept them in peace in Dwarka and gave birth to numerous heroes and amongst them Cupid, the God of Love. Gandhari, the Queen Mother of the Kurus, on behalf of the widows of the fallen heroes in the battlefield, cursed Krishna as he did not prevent the cruel carnage and the miseries of thousands of unfortunate women who lost their husbands and children. Krishna, in order to appease their great grief by practical demonstration, accepted the curse gladly. That all earthly creation is liable to destruction except the true spirit of love, this is the true philosophy of love and divinity enunciated in the great field of battle of Kurukshetra by the driver of the chariot of the great hero Arjuna.

In world politics and religion the ideal Narayana and Nara were at first represented by Krishna and Yudhishthira, who died without a successor. During the reign of the descendants of Arjuna, Yudhishthira was replaced by Arjuna. The great Pandavas represented the five important members of the body politic and Krishna the spirit within, and Draupadi the emblem of prosperity and love. The maintenance of the body does not depend entirely on material food and drink so much as on spiritual. The spirit of intelligence of Krishna and the love of Draupadi controlled the five senses of the body politic of Government to establish the true religion in India, which was struggling for existence in the Great War amongst the followers of the great exponents of the six philosophies of India.

The atheistical doctrine of Charvaka, the Epicurus of India, was the culminating point of the breaking asunder of society and the religion of divine love. Draupadi was dragged in the Dice Hall when she was in the menstrual flux. The great poet Vyasa thereby demonstrated to the world at large that the cause of love does not flow through the same passage of passion which creates abhorrence in the minds of all. The heart within was left untouched by her sufferings and insult, by the form of true love for the husband Yudhishthira, to whom she did not utter a word of blame. She as a true wife did not lose the great opportunity presented to her of releasing the distressed husband. She did not fall in a faint like Sita, she fearlessly defended herself and the action of the good husband and nonplussed the great assembly by her difficult question, her heroic and modest behaviour, befitting the dignity of the Ancient Empress of India.

The four subjects of life, religion, wealth, desire and emancipation, are after all indissolubly connected with love, and the great exponent

of that love in dramatic life is a Hindu wife. Such an ideal wife was Draupadī, who did not have that selfish idea of looking to the interest of her husband only, but looked to the general welfare of the family and kingdom. That was the philosophy of love a queen, nay an empress of India like Draupadī had to represent and which she did so wonderfully in every place and whenever she was called upon to do so. She was actually the goddess of prosperity and love, whom the Pandavas worshipped and their enemies wanted to possess and attempted to do so in vain. Krishna was the emblem of universal love and the reflection of the same was found in Draupadī and hence she was called Krishna. All of them were not of a bright white colour, which in science is the mixture of seven colours, but that of the colour of the sky. Love is not the mixture or fusion of colours but is an original prime colour or takes colour, like the sky with clouds hovering there. The feelings, like the clouds, gather round the sky to shower rain and make the earth productive and happy. It might be said with great force about Draupadī—

“For beauty and her prudence claiming place  
And all praiseworthy excellence and grace”

Love bathes us rejoicing in the crystal light. A woman of beauty worthily deserves all the praise due to her. Peace surveys piety, humility and quiet, the product of love and affection. The great Epic Mahabharata describes the great characters in it in the same light. Draupadī dropped dead in the company of her husband and did not leave him, like Sita, disappointed and grieved. There lies the greatness of the Mahabharata. Yudhishthira did not look back when his beloved wife fell and died, or when his brothers shared the same fate one after the other. Arjuna, who is alleged to be Nara, did not escape it and he fell before Bhīma.

Love, religion and philosophy grew side by side and may be said to be very closely inter-related. The great Epic tries to demonstrate by examples the end of Vedānta philosophy. Philosophy in India is nothing but the fulfilment of religion and Vedānta, as the name implies, is the goal of the Veda. Yudhishthira is represented as the son of the divine dispenser of justice Yama, for his piety and wisdom. Yama's sister is Jāṃbunā, on whose bank and water are closely connected the love exploits of Krishna with the girls of Brindāban. The poetry of the Veda, rivers and their composition refer to the conception of love and its great sacrifices. The parental affection of Nature is reflected in the food and drink in the sweet scented lotus and clear water as well as fishes.

Surely the ethics and religion of love are conveyed in the music of verses, the poetry of the heart and soul of man and woman. Love

has a moral, political and spiritual side and the Indian Epics only describe the different phases so little understood and realised. The great Indian poet Kalidasa was immortalised by his *Sakuntala*, but he has not shown the political aspect of love nor the spiritual aspect. The *Ramayana* shows the political side of love in the exile of Sita after the fire ordeal as well as the *Mahabharata* in disowning the son of Sakuntala, Bharata, with whose feats the *Mahabharata* begins. The reason of King Dushmanta's refusal to admit him as the heir-apparent to the throne is not the curse of the sage Durvasa, as Kalidasa claimed, but that the king should learn to restrain his conduct in future and not to act like Dushmanta for the obvious reason of giving grounds to wild speculations.

"Vaishampayana said — O lady, my union with you took place in private. None knew of it, and therefore, it is natural that people should have thought that our union was only out of lust, and that we were not husband and wife. This son, installed as my heir-apparent, would have been considered as a man of impure birth. Therefore, I was thinking how best to establish your purity. O dearest, O lady of beautiful eyes, I have forgiven you for all the hard words you have uttered in anger. You are my darling."

The political object of the ancient kings is reflected in the above version of the king, but Sakuntala's reprimand includes the citation of Manu as to how kings obtained sons by five ways.

"Manu has said that there are five kinds of sons, namely those begotten by one on his wife, those obtained from others, those purchased for a price, those reared out of affection, and those begotten on other women."

The king did not accept Bharata as his son until the voice of Heaven declared him to be his son and his declaration to the assembly reads —

"Hear all of you the words of the messenger of Heaven. I myself know that this boy is my son. If I had accepted him as my son at Sakuntala's words, my people would have been suspicious, and my son also would not have been considered to be pure (of pure birth)."

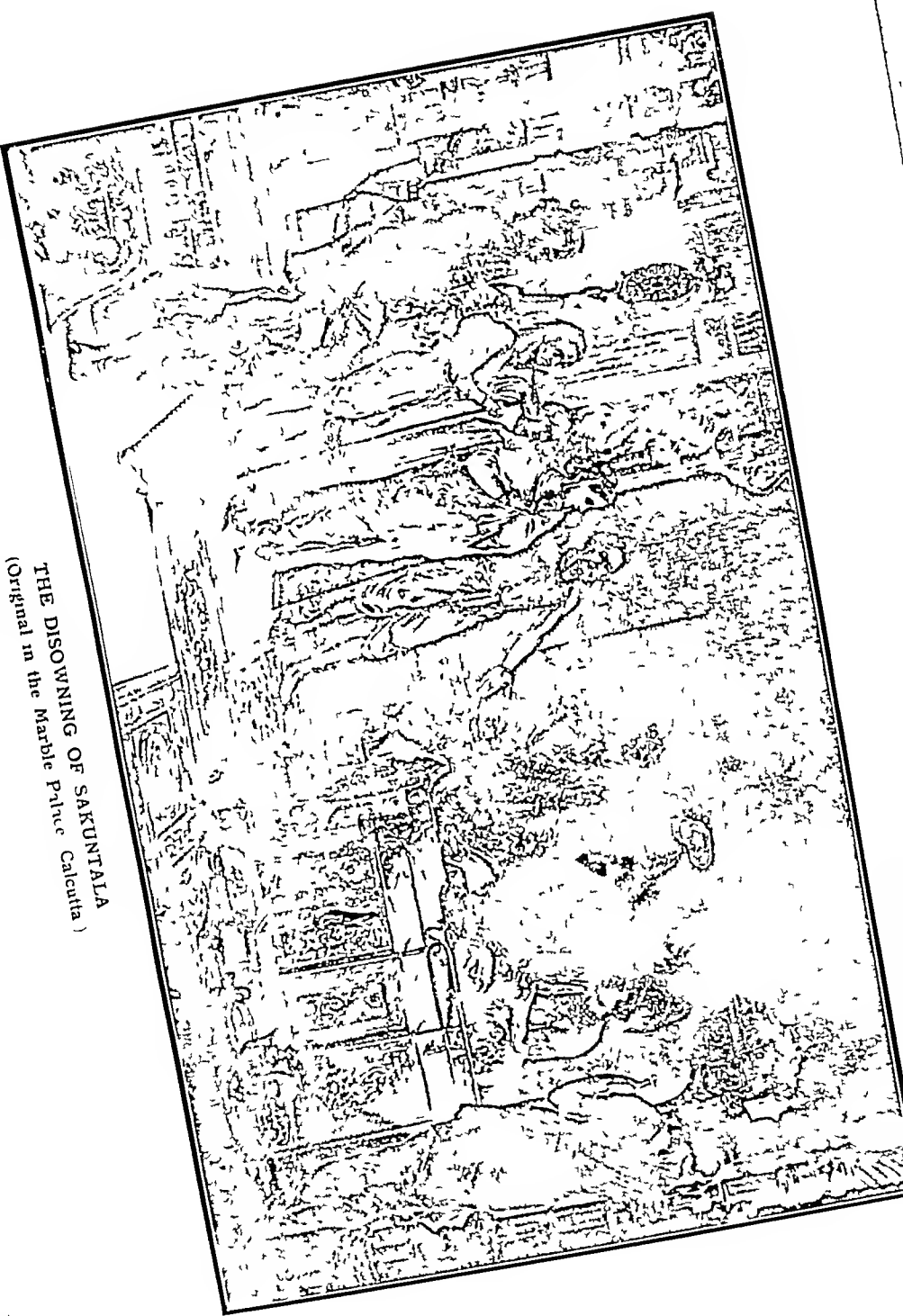
King Santanu was the cursed king Mahavisha of the Ikshvaku family who went to Heaven, but was found incompetent for his rude act of immorality. The incident conveys the ancient idea of heavenly morality in man and woman as against the Western idea, for which the great Epic poet Milton put it in "*Paradise Lost*."

"Once upon a time, the celestials were one day worshipping Brahma. Many royal sages and king Mahavisha were also present there. The queen of the rivers, Ganga also came there to pay her adorations to the Grand sire. Her garments, as

\* The Mbh., Adi Parva, Chapter LXXIV, verses 121—123

† Do do do verse 93

‡ Do do do verses 115-116



THE DISOWNING OF SAKUNTALA  
(Original in the Marble Palace Calcutta)



white as the moon, were blown away by the winds. As her person thus became exposed, the celestials bent down their heads, but the royal sage Mahavisha rudely continued to stare at her. For this (rude act), Mahavisha was cursed by Brahma. He said, 'You will be born on earth and, you shall then again attain to these regions.' The king (Mahavisha) then remembered all the monarchs and ascetics on earth and wished to be born as the son of the greatly powerful Partipa. The best of the rivers (Ganga), seeing the king Mahavisha lose his firmness, went away thinking him in her mind."\*

This is the mythology of heavenly love with which the Mahabharata is closely connected. The love episode of Kacha and Devayani has a great bearing on the question of love and marriage of Ancient India. Kacha was the son of Vrihaspati, the well-known priest of the gods who went to Sukra to learn the great incantation by which Sukra brought to life the Asuras killed by the Devas. Devayani, the daughter of Sukra, fell in love with Kacha. The Asuras, knowing the wicked intention of Kacha, hacked him to pieces and burnt his body to ashes. All these proved abortive as Sukra revived him at the importunities of his daughter. A third time the Asuras killed him and burnt his body and the ashes were put in the wine the great sage Sukra took. Then came the final struggle of the love of Devayani and Sukra. The filial love had to sacrifice for the love of Devayani for Kacha, which was nothing more than an attachment of companionship. Kacha came to life ripping open the stomach of Sukra and Kacha revived his preceptor to life by the incantation of Sukra. The wine was then forbidden as a drink for the Brahmanas by Sukra as a remembrance of the incidents †. When Kacha was going to leave the preceptor's house Devayani offered her love and a proposal of marriage was made to him.

"Vaishampayana said —Your vow is now over you should now fix affection on me who love you. Accept my hand with ordained rites and Mantras. Kacha said —You are an object of my respect and worship, as is your illustrious father. O lady of faultless features, you are an object of greater reverence to me (than your father). You are dearer than life to the high-souled Bhargava. O amiable lady, you are ever worthy of my worship, as you are the daughter of my preceptor. As your father Sukra, my preceptor, is ever honoured by me, so are you. O Devayani, therefore, you should not speak to me thus. Devayani said —O best of the twice born, you are the son of my preceptor's son, you are not the son of my father. Therefore, you are an object of my respect and worship. O Kacha, when the Asuras killed you again and again, you should recollect to-day the love I showed towards you. O virtuous man remembering my love and affection for you, and also my devoted regard for you, you should not abandon me without any faults. Kacha said —O lady of virtuous vows, do not urge me into such a sinful course. O lady of fair eyebrows, be graceful to me. O amiable lady, you are an object of greater regard than my preceptor. O large eyed lady, O lady of handsome face, O amiable maiden, the place the body of the son of Kavi, (Sukra) where you live, is also my

\* The Mbh. Adī Parva, Chapter XCVI, verses 3—8, page 141

† Chapter LXXVI, verse 65





king, for all these reasons, marriage exists (in this world). The husband enjoys the company of his wife, both here in this world and hereafter. The learned men have said that a man himself is born as his son, therefore, a man whose wife has given birth to a son, should look upon her as his mother. Looking at the face of the son, begotten on his wife, a man sees his own face as he does in a mirror, and feels himself as happy as a virtuous man attaining to Heaven. Men, burnt by mental grief or afflicted by disease, feel as much relieved as a perspiring man does in a cool bath. No man, even in anger should ever do anything that is disagreeable to his wife, for happiness, joy, virtue and everything depend on the wife. Wife is the sacred soil in which the husband is born again. Even Rishis cannot create men without women. What is a greater happiness to a father than what the father feels when his son, running to him, clasps him with his (tiny little) arms, though his body is full of dust and dirt? Why are you treating with indifference this your son who has himself come to you and who is wistfully casting his glances towards you? Even ants support their offspring and do not destroy their eggs. Why then should you not, being learned in the rules of piety, support your own child? The touch of the sandal paste, that of women and water, is not so pleasing as that of one's own infant son, locked in his embrace. As the Brahmana is the best among bipeds (men), as cow is the best among quadrupeds, as preceptor is the best among all superiors, so is the son among all objects pleasing to the touch\* "

The most intimate personal human relationship of all the material world is the home, and it is said that the comfort of home life rests with the wife, who is in charge of the home. Man's energy and woman's devotion are the key-notes of success and prosperity. The rule for each individual human being is that the happiness of a human being depends upon love and true friendship. If love is true the question of losing interest does not arise in man or woman by reason of personality. The atmosphere of love is progressive and not stationary, and the great art of life is nothing but the perpetual realisation of love. The means of self-expression can bring out the individual quality of each man and woman where there is true love.

The work one does for no return or reward but for the sake of giving expression to his or her feelings, such work shows the vitality ever newly inspired by the breath of love. This form of self-expression is simply inexhaustible. Without this there is no true happiness in the intimate personal relationship of man and woman. Love is consciousness which unites the body, mind and spirit of lovers and there is hardly any question of sex-appeal. Love gives self-control and courage, one does not inherit it from father or mother, it is the result of cultivation and education of the soul within. Innocent love between mature man and woman is not as easy as amongst children. In youth if such love is continued it breeds gossip. One must either have the strength of mind to brave this or bid farewell to such friendship. Boys can be intimate friends with each other, likewise girls, but in that there is no peculiar

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\* The Mbh, Chapter LXIV, verses 14-56

sensitiveness of intellect, no grade of apprehension, no delicacy of humour which can make the forms of communication pleasant. It is not the sex attraction which is to be attributed to the special kind of pleasure one experiences, for passion or lust makes love more or less selfish and breeds envy and jealousy. Where there is oneness or exclusive idea of enjoyment there is jealousy and envy. Man or woman is not a mere chattel of love. Self control alone can still the lust of possession and it is for this the example of the king Sudarsana is cited in the beginning of Anusasana Parva, that he had the courage of his convictions, faced the truth and stilled the lust of possession which translated him to Heaven in person. By throwing away one's last rag of pride and possession one stands up robed and crowned with Heaven's diadem, worthy of being translated there. This is the perfection of human unselfish love, but the divine love on earth was demonstrated in the life of Sri Krishna, the wielder of the discus of love, not any divine weapon which Arjuna and others possessed through the loan of material gods Siva, Indra, Sun, or others.

The Great War of Kurukshetra was not only a terrible destruction of infidels, but produced the kingdom of the good Yudhishthira, a king of piety, truthfulness and virtue. The emotion of senses which sages like Visvamitra, Narada, etc., tried to stifle are not static but finite hungers. The beautiful Sakuntala was the offspring of the love of Visvamitra and the mother of the Bharata family of kings.

The Indian Epics are really grand and sublime as they please at all times all kinds of men. This united assent and combination of so many different judgments stamp a very high and unequivocal value on them which cannot legally be thrown aside. A wise son makes a father glad and God is delighted with the wisdom of his creation. The righteous shall be reigning in the memory of good men and the memory of the just is blessed. Wisdom is better than brute strength. The force of the tempest cannot blind the wisdom and experience of the pilot in saving his ship from being wrecked. The axe with the short stick removes the forest of trees. Who can stand in the fearful battle of Kurukshetra unhurt, except he be the emblem of Divine Love, who else could be the divine guide of the victorious heroes? It was not the love of Draupadi or Subhadra that led the Pandavas to glory or victory.

Man does not care so much to look into the moral very carefully as he likes to stick to what is agreeable. Every one likes to make friendship with the dead, even if they be sworn enemies when alive. The tombs and their epitaphs are signs of repentance that they were neglected and envied during their life-time. If there are no public virtues how

can laws enforce them on the public at large? A prophet or reformer is seldom honoured in his life-time. It is practically true that illustrious dead persons are calumnied by those who consider that their actions overshadowed them. There are few people who can wrap themselves in their own integrity. Cardinal Wolsey is represented to have said this to King Henry VIII by Shakespeare:—

"My robe

And my integrity to Heaven, is all

I now dare call my own."

It is not the rich kings who display the good and pious men of the age, the patriarchs of moral virtues and laws and the signs of the times in divine love. What Troy owes to Homer, India owes to Vyasa and Valmiki. The great virtues would have been lost if they had not been sung by poets. They are immortalised if they did their work properly with the right selection of heroes and heroines. Hindus burn their dead and do not erect tomb over their illustrious heroes and patriots. The bards and poets make their memorials in verse, but the public at large consecrate their memories in festivals and religious ceremonies.

The mass worshipped God with the king in his public sacrifices, religion he preached through his priest and the law established justice in the realm he ruled.

The Rig Veda reveals the truth of redemption by a sinless sacrifice and Prajapati is identified with the sacrifice. When the early system of sacrifice and offerings was not realised in its spiritual sense—that God to show his holiness and to become the sacrifice, typified by the sacrifices of the law, had to become incarnate—the idea of vicarious suffering for the reconciliation of rebellious beings was lost and sacrificed as the common legacy of all nations and they were soon converted into bribes to appease the angry god and demons so that they would not do the sacrificers any harm. The idea of protection and prevention became the ideal of man. Man had free will and ignorance and accordingly sought protection. The Upanishads gave him the first idea of God and repugnance to vice and favour to virtue were the essential traits of morality. Man wanted to know the author of this great Universe with his growing knowledge as he learnt to utilise the countless things around him. He soon realised the spirit of love in the great Creator, and found by and by that energy is the product of love and suffering. The desire to see the great Creator soon became the earnest aim of life of some men out of curiosity. The dynamic force of imagination gave birth to many things, and to punish the

wicked, who were the great persecutors of humanity, the incarnation of God, half powerful animal and half man, was conceived to establish the holiness and benefaction of God and the sinfulness of the wicked, or the Asuras as they were then styled

Might was then the only right. Men fell prostrate with fear in the worship of the powerful to save themselves from utter destruction. The natural phenomena of earthquake, fire and flood made the intelligent realise the invisible power of the Creator. The Vedic sages prayed for forgiveness for any transgression made knowingly or unknowingly. This was the origin of the religion of the world. The idea of resentment is at the root of it. The Creator's loving holiness becomes a relative attribute to justice. The theory of action and judgment soon came into being. God is love, full of happiness, and he created this earth full of happiness and wealth for the just use of man and other beasts. Man was given free will and intelligence to develop a conscience to judge right and wrong, to co-operate in the works of God by holding communion with Him. Man was endowed with everything if he only utilised the power given to him. It is a choice to love either himself or the spirit of the Creator—there lies the difference between earthly and divine love.

The well-known saying is "Where there is a will there is a way." Will power is the root of the Yoga system of philosophy. God created the Universe by the fiat of his great will, and man sought union with Him by the will power to control his senses and mind. From the material the abstract spiritual idea of God came into being, of no form or figure to the wise. In envy the object of hatred and fear is always in the mind of the sinner, this is a process of abstraction of thought, an inferior system of Yoga for the vicious and ignorant. Ravana and his brothers, Kamsa and Sisupala, obtained their salvation through it. The gates of Heaven were not closed to them like other religions. The Pouranic idea of salvation was by seven generations of births through devotion to God and by three of enmity. The Bible believes in miracles and all other books of religion admit them. In the birth of Krishna or Rama there was nothing unusual. They were not prophets of God, they were masters of action, love and sympathy. What Rama lacked, Krishna fulfilled. How pleasant is life if you live with those with whom you think you should live, and not merely for yourself. In the birth of Krishna this is demonstrated. God gives the life of all men in the Universe but lives with those who wish Him to live with them and not merely for themselves. So Krishna went to Brindaban though born in Muthara (Muttra).

"O be wiser, Thou !  
 Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,  
 True dignity abides with him alone  
 Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,  
 Can still suspect, and still revere himself,  
 In lowliness of heart."

(WORDSWORTH)

Krishna was not the son of a king or born by the boon of sacrifice;  
 he was beauty incarnate

"Beauty—a living Presence of earth,  
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms  
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed  
 From earth's materials—waits upon my steps,  
 Pitches her tents before me as I move,  
 An hourly neighbour Paradise, and groves  
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old  
 Sought in the Atlantic Main—Why should they be  
 A history only of departed things,  
 Or a mere fiction of what never was ?  
 For the discerning intellect of man,  
 When wedded to this goodly universe  
 In love and holy passion, shall find these  
 A simple produce of the common day."

(WORDSWORTH)

The mythology of divine love is depicted in the churning of the ocean. The goddess of prosperity is Lakshmi, consort of Narayana, daughter of the illustrious sage Bhrigu and his wife Khyati. She was drowned in the ocean at the time of Indra's fall by the curse of the sage Durbasa, and she was recovered in the churning of the sea. In the figure of Narayana she is sitting at the feet as if kneading over the hood of the snake in the ocean. Ananta is the name of the snake on which Narayana is sleeping and on whose head, it is said, the earth rests. Ananta is the name of Balarama and the Mahabharata describes the death of Balarama when the snake came out of his body. The Mahabharata says in the Santi Parva that the goddess of prosperity left the Asuras and came to Indra\*. The goddess of prosperity lives where there is no animosity towards men but truth, charity and mercy reign. Peace and morality are the signs of divine love.

The Asuras and the Devas fought for the division of nectar. In fact is that the nectar of life lies in good action. It is not given by God. The goddess of prosperity lives with men of good character. Such men are blessed with divine love—that is the basic principle of the goddess Lakshmi. The Asuras are angry as they were not allowed to enjoy the nectar, but when they became virtuous they were restored from the kingdom of Heaven. The story of Heaven and Hell is a

mind and soul, and there is no separate place assigned for each, for it is the culture of the mind which makes a man or a woman look up and not down, aspire and not despair. Divine love is all abandonment of self. A stranger when he sees a serpent is going to kill a man unaware, kills it, without being called upon to do so, through the hidden force of divine love, even ignoring the danger he runs should the snake, if not killed, attack him. The great poet Shakespeare says of true love —

"Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bonds with the remover to remove  
O no it is an everfix'd mark,  
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;  
It is the star of every wandering bark;  
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken  
Love's not Time's fool though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom".

Love is not the fruit of passion. The great Epic demonstrates it in Draupadi. The love of youths Drupada and Drona ended in envy and dismemberment of Drupad's kingdom. To set it right Drupada performed the sacrifice for the birth of such children who would be able to recover the lost kingdom. This is the genesis of the great Epic in which the Pandavas figured. Draupadi, Dhristadyumna, etc., were born. Drupada was perhaps told by the sages that he should take the assistance of Sri Krishna, the master of Divine Love, in the marriage of Draupadi. True love represented in Draupadi is a friend of divine love, as from true love divine love comes. Divine love stepped in and said in the action —

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments."

The marriage passed off and after it the goddess of prosperity Lakshmi blessed the Pandavas with the suzerainty of India. The goddess of prosperity is reflected in Draupadi. Even the Pandavas' worst enemy Duryodhana admitted it and wanted to deprive them of her.

"You should remember Arjuna had his famous bow and Bhima his mace, but it was the praiseworthy Draupadi who liberated the Pandavas, who were all made slaves at the game of dice."

Draupadi was a fearless, cultured Indian princess who showed that she could stand on her own legs, could render great assistance to Yudhishthira and his brothers. She did not accuse Yudhishthira before

his enemies or at home, her stand before the memorable Dice Hall could not but elicit praise from all. She demonstrated what true love is, she justified the action of her husband Yudhishthira, and stood by him in his worst miseries

"Nor for reward, or any fee,  
But like as thou has loved me,  
I love, and ever will love thee,  
Only as king of this my heart,  
Only because my God thou art".

(S WILBERFORCE)

The friends of Duryodhana, headed by Karna, tried her fully by damning the Pandava king, but she proved by her conduct that love when repressed engenders power

"The more thou damn'st it up, the more it burns  
The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage,  
But when his fair course is not hinder'd stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage "

(SHAKESPEARE)

So Shakespeare corroborated her conduct Violent passions cannot disturb the mind where true love is. Love guards against vice Every transgression can be traced to the working of the evil passions in the human heart. It takes possession when the heart is vacant or vacillating. The mind, like the body, needs to be trained and equipped before it can use its powers in the most advantageous way A man or woman when in love learns the art of thinking well, and consequently the natural powers come into play He who is in love, sees every time he looks at the beloved object when he is absent and when he is near, drawing from his movements, eyes, speeches, writings and last though not least mind those virtues and attractions which he possesses

The lover exhausts the stock of the beloved in expanding his soul. This is the root of self-sacrifice in true love If a lover sacrifices his own pleasure for that of his beloved, he is a devotee at the temple of love, never self-possessed. Individuality is no longer his own foolish master, love craves a new and higher object, it inhales the celestial air of doing good to others and makes man or woman forget self-interest Man becomes the sport of circumstance when he loses command over himself The art of governing passions is the keynote of success in this vale of tears Wealth, health, skill and knowledge can give little satisfaction to man or woman if one does not cultivate the control of one's senses. Love and true love can alone control the senses

The ancient stories, perceiving the innumerable ills resulting from ungoverned passions, sought to extirpate them and reactions took place.



Sakuntala, Kripa, Drona, Vyasa are said to be the fruits of such reactions. It is true that few possess the firmness to go against the laws of Nature. A plain, illiterate man does not fall into that error which a learned man does with the theories of subtle casuists who labour chiefly to show how one may approach sin without sinning. There were men who studied morality to make a show of their learning and in order not to live according to the accepted rules. When such men became the editors of the great Epic these things were introduced as something novel and mysterious to be in keeping with the greatness of the illustrious example prodigies. Draupadi did not escape in their hands as wife of the five Pandavas.

"The Gospel contains," says Mr. Locke, "so perfect a body of ethics that reason may be excused from any further inquiry, since she may find man's duty clearer and easier in revelation than in herself." Fortunately, such is not exactly the case with the great Epic.

The truth can be ascertained from the different versions of the different authors and editors, which are not all lost but are somehow preserved. It is of interest to mention here the cause of this departure from truth and rectitude and the mingling of religion and dissipation so contrary to each other. It is the usual practice among mankind from the growth of civilisation. The habit of lying owes its origin either to fear of punishment, love of gain, or the ambition to working upon the evil passions of man, making everything suitable to the tastes of the people and winning their admiration and applause. Aristotle's reply to a question as to what a man could gain by telling lies is very interesting and to the point — "Not to be credited when he tells the truth." It is well known that gross lies in trade are indulged in for gain and malice forges slander. Poets invent incidents and circumstances which did not actually take place only to embellish narratives to tell upon the imagination of the audience. The design was to display their importance. He who in his first attempt succeeds cannot but be strongly tempted to pursue his vile course. The beauty of the soul is temperance, courage and wisdom, from which divine love springs.

Material and moral prosperity depended on the virtuous conduct of man, and when he fell below that standard he was called Asura. War was inevitable when they fought for the right to own a kingdom by sheer force of physical power against moral force. It was a fight between uncommon physical and numerical strength against cultural, intellectual and spiritual power not so numerically great. The Philistine giant was killed by the stripling David with a small stone hurled from a sling. Krishna and Balarama were such striplings who killed Kansa, the son-in-law of the great king Jarasandha in a sacrifice, and they came

into the lime-light. Neither of them sat on the throne that fell vacant by the death of the usurper Kansa, but they made Kansa's father Ugrasen do so. The most powerful Jarasandha, hearing of his son's cruel fate, tried his level best to be revenged but failed.

Krishna thought of making alliance with his relatives, the Pandavas, who were sought to be destroyed by Durjodhana. They were all physically and intellectually strong, full of energy, ability and vigour and with a right title to the kingdom. Draupadi was the gift-horse with which the Pandavas' alliance with Drupada and Krishna was secured and that was the real beginning of the great fight. The Pandavas revenged the lac house incidents at the Swayambara festival of Draupadi by meteing out blows and thrusts of arms on Durjodhana and his friends, who made the lac house to destroy them, and secured the share of their paternal estate by the alliance of marriage with Draupadi. Krishna founded an empire at Dwarka. This was followed by the most important events, the killing of Jarasandha, the Nemean Lion of India, and the founding of an empire with a capital at Indraprastha (Old Delhi) by the Pandavas.

All these and Rajasuya were the height of glory of Krishna's intellectual powers and made the Pandavas famous for their martial spirit and chivalry. This is the subject matter of Adi Kanda, or the first part of the Mahabharata, where Krishna and the Pandavas were the real heroes of morality and love. Yudhishthira married Draupadi, and his brothers were the protectors of the queen and the kingdom. Draupadi's modesty and love were great and just, which made them free from falling together by the ears. The Ramayana at the end of the reading speaks of the greatest blessing on earth to make brothers live in unity. This also was the aim of the other work, and Draupadi by her good conduct and affectionate love towards the Pandavas achieved it in the Mahabharata. Yudhishthira alone was addressed as a husband and others as brothers-in-law, as appear in the addresses of Draupadi in the great Epic.

The marriage of Draupadi has direct and indirect relations in the Epic which have not as yet been seen.\* The original marriage ceremony took place with Yudhishthira as the text testifies, but in philosophy it demonstrates the creation of the moral and spiritual world that real love cannot be personal but universal; when it is so, it unites men instead of separating them. The carnal love separates the brothers Sunda and Upasunda in the story of Tilottama and Bali and Sugriva

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\* In the Appendix "C" where the texts in all the collections bearing on the subject as found by Dr Sukthankar, Editor of the "Critical Edition of the Mahabharata" are given

It is said in a Polish proverb that a woman draws more with a hair of her head than a yoke of oxen well harnessed, but the ancient Hindus declare that the joy of home depends on a good wife for the hearts of each other are joined by the angle of happiness. Such a wife was Draupadi so far as the home comforts and unity of the Pandavas were concerned, and there she acted in such a way that she did not make any difference between her husband Yudhishthira and his brothers—that was the illusion or Maya. The European poets sang and in their words the part Draupadi played may be said —

"It is the secret sympathy,  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind  
In body and in soul can bind."

(SCOTT)

"But to see her were to love her  
Love but her, and love for ever."

(BYRON)

"O that the desert were my dwelling place  
With one spirit for my minister,  
That I might all forget the human race  
And, hating no one, love but only her."

(BYRON)

"Her feet are tender for she sees her steps,  
Not on the ground, but on the heads of men."

(HOMER)

The happiness of Yudhishthira was not his own individual happiness, but he was a man of the world whom the world can accept as the ideal king of men and his arms and armour were the five men and two women, i.e., his four brothers and Krishna at the head and his mother, Kunti, and Draupadi. This is the real conception of the great Epic. The grouping of the picture has been of the utmost importance. How a given figure in a picture is affected and is altered by an artist as well as by the revisers is illustrated below.

Titian copied the Deity dividing Light from Darkness in the Sistine Chapel and used it in his picture of the battle of Cadore showing a General falling from his horse. Michael Angelo's picture of Samson was copied by Tintoret and Samson was converted into a Jupiter by the introduction of an eagle, thunder and lightning obliterating the jaw-bone of the ass. There had been several transformations and divisions of the Mahabharata of Vyasa and the Ramayana of Valmiki by various editors and rhapsodists. It is true that art tries to perfect ideals. Ruskin says —

"Remembering always that there are two characters in which all greatness of art consists: first, the earnest and intense seizing of natural facts, then the ordering

those facts by strength of human intellect, so as to make them, for all who look upon them, to the utmost serviceable, memorable, and beautiful. And thus great Art is nothing else than the type of strong and noble life; for as the ignoble person, in his dealings with all that occurs in the world about him, first sees nothing clearly, looks nothing fairly in the face, and then allows himself to be swept away by the trampling torrent and unescapable force of the things that he would not foresee and could not understand, so the noble person, looking the facts of the world full in the face, and fathoming them with deep faculty, then deals with them in unalarmed intelligence and unhurried strength, and becomes, with his human intellect and will, no unconscious nor insignificant agent in consummating their good and restraining their evil."

Poets paint in their words, Artists speak in their works and Law demonstrates the ethics of morality and the progress of ages. The customs and usages found injurious to the people were stopped and punishments were mentioned for the transgressors. There is no law of punishment in the Hindu institutes for marrying five husbands if ever that had been the custom amongst the Hindus. No idols or pictures or carvings found in India show that the five Pandavas were married to one Draupadī. The great work of Vyasa has been misused in the manner the artists used the masterpieces of Michael Angelo.

Love is the light of Heaven. Heaven's harmony is in love, the silent note of music and main energy of life. It illumines the darkness of heart within to find the dweller there, vibrates the chord of sentiment to sing the music of life and inspires man and woman to sacrifice everything to realise the truth behind the love of life. No man or woman is perfect unless love finds its way into the heart to fill it with true affection and eliminate all malice or envy. It justifies the name Ajatasatru, by which Yudhisthira was universally known and respected. The ethics of morality and love the great Epics of India teach, and the heroes and heroines who illustrate them are the real characters worthy of notice. The battles or exploits of warriors have never been the real themes of the Indian Epics as the majority of the European scholars took them to be.

Krishna represents the divine love of religion and Krishna or Draupadī the human devotion of love and sympathy, and Yudhisthira the universal love of a king to rule the heart of men and control his own selfish passions as well as to be a bright example to others. The past and its remembrance have important lessons which the Epics record to afford pleasure in the thought of those who suffered and established the kingdom of peace and love instead of raising inordinate cravings of flesh and blood. There must be the lesson of wisdom and humility in the presence of the spirit of God, which is the ethic of morality and love which leads man to eternity. Peace is the result of a disciplined and cultured mind where the spirit exults, when that spirit is united

with the universal spirit the question of eternity comes. This is the order of progress from the moral sphere to spiritual ascendancy of eternity. Man alone can do much for himself as he is placed in the midst of ever-changing incidents and events of life. It is the knowledge and power of heart within man which gives him peace in his faith, trust and love in Him whom the heart yearns to meet and the meeting place is the universal love which does not fight in the field of battle but only watches and helps the good.

Krishna represented universal love and Yudhishthira the disciplined and cultured mind in whom the unity of the universal spirit of love met and led him to eternity. This is the solution before the plot which Vyasa conceived and displayed in the great work.

The spirit of love is even within the dead earth, and the Hindus ascribe wealth and prosperity to mother earth. For earth men fight and so Sita was the daughter of mother earth and retired to her breast when Rama had to retire from the world. Sita assumed the lust of Ravana, Draupadi came out of the fire of sacrifice as a boon of god Narayana and destroyed not one king but a host of kings of India. Fire became the great weapon of men in the progress of time until fire-arms became the chief instruments of war. The invisible fire of love is more powerful than fire-arms. Siva, the great god of the material world, burnt to ashes the Hindu Cupid of Love. He transferred his place from body to mind. Love burns the mind of men and women, passion rots the soul within, and what excites it received the name of woman, *i e*, woe to man. Woman is at the bottom of all troubles of the material world. Troy was destroyed, likewise Ceylon, for the sake of a beautiful woman. Draupadi was not such a woman. No one could cast an evil eye upon her; neither for possession of her, nor for carrying her away was the great battle of Kurukshetra fought. Jayadratha, the brother-in-law of Duryodhana, it is said, carried her off from the camp but she was rescued on the way by the Pandavas. This story is incredible for the obvious reason that Draupadi was describing the features of each of the Pandavas as if Jayadratha was not known to them.

The Hindu ideal of God who rules the Universe does not favour everlasting perdition for Satan. The worst Satan has been emancipated by works of love and faith. Hindu Puranas describe them and the Epics follow them. Old Puranas had been lost in the ascendancy of Buddhism. The new Puranas were revived at the time of Hindu revival. The Epics have thus become important sources of those revivals, and it was for that their incidents were recited in short in almost all the Puranas and to Vyasa was ascribed the authorship of them all. Sri Krishna, the

king-maker of Ancient India, whom the Mahabharata describes as the ideal hero of love, learning, intelligence and justice, first appeared subservient to God Narayana and then became an emblem of universal love. The empire of love he established at Dwarka, which he conceived in Brindaban in his younger days, at last took firm root in the kingdom of Yudhisthira, whom he established by his good counsel and superior wisdom.

## EPIC AUTHORS AND EDITORS.

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Professor Max Muller has admitted that

"the only sphere where the Indian mind found itself at liberty to act, to create, and to worship, was the sphere of religion and philosophy and nowhere have religious and metaphysical ideas struck roots so deep in the mind of a nation as in India. The Hindus were a nation of philosophers. Their struggles were the struggles of thought, their past the problem of creation, their future, the problem of existence. The present alone, which is the real and living solution of the problems of the past and the future, seems never to have attracted their thoughts or to have called out their energies. The shape which metaphysical ideas take amongst the different classes of society, and at different periods of civilisation naturally varies from coarse superstition to sublime spiritualism. Put, taken as a whole, history supplies no second instance where the inward life of the soul has so completely absorbed all the practical faculties of a whole people and, in fact, almost destroyed those qualities by which a nation gains its place in history. It might therefore be justly said that India has no place in the political history of the world.\* An expedition like that of Alexander could never have been conceived by an Indian king and the ambition of native conquerors, in those few cases where it existed, never went beyond the limits of India itself. But if India has no place in the political history of the world it certainly has a right to claim its place in the intellectual history of mankind. The less the Indian nation has taken part in the political struggles of the world and expended its energies in the exploits of war and the formation of empires, the more it has fitted itself and concentrated all its powers for the fulfilment of the important mission reserved to it in the history of the last †. After primeval phylolatriy, which was common to all the members of the Aryan family, had, in the hands of a wily priesthood, been changed into an empty idolatry, the Indian alone, of all the Aryan nations produced a new form of religion, which has well been called subjective, as opposed to the more objective worship of nature. That religion, the religion of Buddha, has spread far beyond the limits of the Aryan world, and to our limited vision, it may seem to have retarded the advent of Christianity among a large portion of the human race ' ‡

One cannot agree that India has not influenced the political history of the world. Alexander's invasion of India was not a successful expedition so far as the conquest of India was concerned, yet the return of the expedition changed the political atmosphere of Western civilisation. The Greeks and the Romans introduced the Indian system and policy of warfare in their countries. The learned professor admitted that "no people certainly made a more favourable impression upon the Greeks than the Indians." And when we read the account of their moral and intellectual condition at the time of Alexander we are obliged to

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\*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", pages 30 31

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", pages 31 32

‡Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", page 32

admit that if some of their good qualities are no longer to be met with among the Indians of later times, this is owing, not entirely to an original defect of character, but to that continual system of oppression exercised upon them by foreign conquerors, to whose physical power they submitted, while they could not help despising their masters as barbarians.

His views about the two Epic poems of India are worth recording as they show the angle of vision of the erudite Western Sanskrit scholar, to whom it must be admitted Indians are greatly indebted, though they may not necessarily agree with all his conclusions

"If we examine the two Epic poems of India, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, we shall find it impossible to use them as authorities for the Vedic age, because we are not yet able to decide critically which parts of these poems are ancient, and which are modern and post-Buddhist, or at least retouched by the hands of late compilers and editors. There are certainly very ancient traditions and early Vedic legends in both of these poems. Some of their heroes are taken from the same epic cycle in which the Vedic poetry moves. These, however, only form subjects for episodes in the two poems, while their principal heroes are essentially different in their character and manners. In fact, though there are remains of the Vedic age to be found in the Epic poems, like the stories of Urrasi and Pururavas, of Sakuntala and Dushmanta, of Uddalaka, Sunahsepha, Janaka Vaideha and particularly of the Vedic Rishis, like Vasishta, Visramitra, Janakalya, Dirghatamas, Kakshirata, Kavasha, and many others, yet this would only prove that the traditions of the Vedic age were still in the mouth of the people at the time when the Epic poetry of the Hindus was first composed, or that they were not yet forgotten in after times, when the Brahmins began to collect all the remains of Epic songs into one large body, called the *Mahabharata*. If we compare the same legends as exhibited in the hymns and Brahmanas of the Veda, and as related in the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, or the *Puranas*, the Vedic version of them will mostly be found to be more simple, more primitive, and more intelligible than those of the Epic and Puranic poems. This is not meant as a denial that real Epic poetry, that is to say, a mass of popular songs, celebrating the power and exploits of gods and heroes, existed at a very early period in India, as well as among the other Aryan nations, but it shows that, if yet existing, it is not in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* we have to look for these old songs, but rather in the Veda itself. In the collection of the Vedic hymns, there are some which may be called Epic, and may be compared with the short hymns ascribed to Homer. In the Brahmanas passages occur, in prose and verse, celebrating the actions of old kings.\* There is no allusion to any of the titles of the *Puranas* or to the *Ramayana* in Vedic works, whether Brahmanas or *Sutras*. But as in the *Sutras* of *Asvalayana* the name of the *Bharata*, and according to some MSS even the name of the *Mahabharata*, is mentioned, this may be considered as the earliest trace, not merely of single Epic poems, but of a collection of them. The age of *Asvalayana*, which will be approximately fixed afterwards, would, therefore, if we can rely on our MSS, furnish a limit below which the first attempt at a collection of a *Bharata* or *Mahabharata* ought not to be placed. But there is no hope that we shall ever succeed by critical researches in restoring the *Bharata* to that primitive form and shape in which it may have existed before or at the time of *Asvalayana*. Much has indeed been done by Professor Lassen, who, in his "Indian Antiquities," has pointed out characteristic marks by which the modern parts of the *Mahabharata* can be distin-

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\*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 36-37



guished from the more ancient, and we may soon expect to see his principles still farther carried out in a translation of the whole Mahabharata, which with the help of all the Sanskrit commentaries, has been most carefully prepared by one of the most learned and laborious scholars of Germany" \*.

It is evident from the views of the eminent Western scholars that the Mahabharata contains historical matter of the greatest importance about Ancient India. Professor Max Muller says that the

"Epic tradition in the mouth of the people was too strong to allow this essential and curious feature in the life of its heroes (i.e., five brothers having a common wife) to be changed. However, the Brahmanic editors of the Mahabharata, seeing that they could not alter tradition on this point, have at least endeavoured to excuse and mitigate it. Thus we are told in the poem itself, that at one time the five brothers came home, and informed their mother that they had found something extremely precious. Without listening further their mother at once asked them to divide it as brothers. The command of a parent must always be literally obeyed, and as Draupadi was their newly discovered treasure, they were obliged, according to the views of the Brahmins, to obey, and to have her as their common wife. Indian law-givers call this a knotty point, they defend the fact, but refuse to regard it as a precedent. †

This knotty point of the Indian law-givers about Draupadi's marriage, which Western scholars and their co-religionists have reviled in their books, has been explained. The learned professor speaks of his admiration of the Sanskrit Scholars in his well-known book "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" in the following manner —

"We may admire the delicate poetry of Kalidasa, the philosophical rigour of Kapila, the voluptuous mysticism of Javadera, and the epic simplicity of Vyasa and Valmiki, but as long as their works float before our eyes like the mirage of a desert, as long as we are unable to tell what real life, what period in the history of a nation they reflect, there is something wanting to engage our sympathies in the same manner as they are engaged by the tragedies of Æschylus, or the philosophical essays of Cicero. ‡

It is evident from this that the learned professor believed in the authorships of Vyasa and Valmiki of the two great Epics of India and the real life of Ancient India of the different periods is given as far as possible. He has given his ground for divine origin to the ancient national poetry as follows :—

"We can understand how a nation might be led to ascribe a superhuman origin to their ancient national poetry, particularly if that poetry consisted chiefly of prayers and hymns addressed to their gods. But it is different with the prose compositions of the Brahmanas. The reason why the Brahmanas, which are evidently so much more modern than the Mantras, were allowed to participate in the name of Sruti, could only have been because it was from these theological compositions, and not from the simple old poetry of the hymns, that a supposed divine authority could be derived for the greater number of the ambitious claims of the Brahmins. But, although we need not ascribe any weight to the arguments by which the Brahmins

\*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 42-43

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," page 47

‡Professor Max. Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 63-64.

endeavour to establish the contemporaneous origin of the Mantras and Brahmanas, there seems to be no reason why we should reject as equally worthless the general opinion with regard to the more ancient date of both the Brahmanas and Mantras, if contrasted with the Smritis and the profane literature of India. It may easily happen where there is a canon of sacred books that later compositions become incorporated together with more ancient works, as was the case with the Brahmanas, but we can hardly imagine that old and genuine parts should ever have been excluded from a list of sacred writings and a more modern date ascribed to them, unless it be in the interest of a party to deny the authority of certain doctrines contained in these rejected documents."

This may apply equally to Epic literature. Both the Epics describe the fight between Vasistha and Visvamitra, which is also referred to in the Veda.

The original occupation of the Parohita may simply have been to perform the usual sacrifices, but, with the ambitious policy of the Brahmanas it soon became a stepping-stone to political power.

"One of the greatest events in the life of Vasistha was the victory which King Sulasa he obtained over his grandson. But in the Mandala of the Vasisthas, the same event is sometimes alluded to as belonging to the past, and in one of the hymns ascribed to the same Vasistha we read:—Committing our sons and offspring to the sovereign protection of Aditi, Mitra and Varuna, like guardians, give to Sulasa, let us not make our gods angry! The original institution of a Parohita, as the spiritual adviser of a king or a chief need not be regarded as the sign of a far advanced literary civilization. The position of the Brahmanas must have been a peculiar one in India from the very beginning. They appear from the very first as a class of men of higher intellectual power than the rest of the Aryan colonists, and their general position if at all recognised, could hardly have been different from that of Vasistha in the camp of Sulasa. The hymns, therefore, which only allude to a Parohita or priest's in general need not be ascribed to a late age."

The descendants of the family of the well-known priests Vasistha and Bhrigu were the authors of the Indian Epics. Visvamitra was connected with Bhrigu and it is significant that the account given in the Mahabharata, which is quoted as a discourse between Arjuna and Chitraratha, has hardly any connection with the main subject of the Mahabharata. Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa seemed to have flourished in the Mantra period but is not entirely represented by the collection of ancient hymns. Such a work would be sufficient in itself to give a character to an age, and we might appeal, in the history of Ancient Greek literature, to the age of the Diaskenasts.

A generation which begins to collect has entered into a new phase of life. Nations, like individuals, become conservative when they cease to trust implicitly in themselves, and have learnt from experience that they are not better than their fathers. But though the distinctive

\*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 76-77

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 48-3

‡Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 183-489

feature of the Mantra period consisted in gathering the fruits of a bygone spring, this was not the only work which occupied the Brahmins of that age. Where poems have to be collected from the mouths of the people, they have likewise to be arranged. Corrections are supposed to be necessary, whole verses may have to be supplied. After collecting and correcting a large number of poems, many a man would feel disposed to try his own poetical powers, and if new songs were wanted, it did not require great talent to set them to the simple strains of the ancient Rishis. Thus we find in the Rig Veda that, after the collection of the ten Mandalas was finished, some few hymns were added, generally at the end of a chapter, which are known by the name of Khilas. We can hardly call them successful imitations of the genuine songs, but in India they seem to have acquired a certain reputation. They found their way into the Samhitas of the other Vedas, they are referred to in the Brahmanas, and though they are not counted in the Anukramanis, together with the original hymns, they are there also mentioned as recognised additions. It is admitted that Vyasa became illustrious as a classifier of the Vedas, entitling him to the name of Veda Vyasa, as is mentioned in the Mahabharata. Dr Winternitz admitted it in his book quoting the text (Page 322, Note 2). He admitted

"that some elements of our present Mahabharata reach back into the Vedic period, and that much, especially in the didactic sections is drawn from a literary common property, from which also Buddhists and Jainas (probably already in the 5th century B C) have drawn. Finally, it must still be mentioned, that not only the events described in the Epic but also the innumerable names of kings and royal races, however historical some of the events and many names may appear, do not belong to Indian history in the true sense of the word. It is true that the Indians set the reign of Yudhisthira and the Great War of the Mahabharata at the beginning of the Kaliyuga, or Iron Age, i.e. 3102 B C but this date for the beginning of the Kaliyuga is based upon the artificial calculation of Indian Astronomers, and the association of this date with the conflict of the Kauravas and Pandavas is, of course, quite arbitrary."\*

The metre in which the Ramayana was written was used in the Vedas, yet credit was given to Valmiki as its founder. The fact is that Valmiki introduced the first ornate poem.

"With regard to language, style and metre, too, the various parts of the Mahabharata show absolutely no uniformity. It is in only quite a general sense that one can speak of 'Epic Sanskrit' as the language of the popular Epics. In reality the language of the Epic is in some parts more archaic, i.e., more closely related to the Ancient Indian of the Vedic prose works, than in other parts. And beside linguistic phenomena which recall the Pali and which can be called popular there are others which one is compelled to call solecisms, such as are often committed, by uneducated and inferior authors like the Purana composers. The style, too, can

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\* Dr Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature" pages 473-474.

only in a general sense be said to be far removed from the so-called 'kavya style', i.e. the style of the later ornate poetry, which is characterised by the excessive use of embellishments (Alankaras). However there is no lack of passages in the Mahabharata which remind us of this kavya style. Beside these, we also find portions which retain the unvarnished style of the old Itihasyas as they are related in the Brahmanas and Upanishads, while again in numerous other portions the most negligent Puranic style prevails. As regards the metre the Sloka which originated in the old Aitihasya is certainly the metre par excellence. But there are earlier and later forms of this Sloka, which are all represented in the Mahabharata. Moreover, our Epic also contains old prose passages, in which the prose is occasionally rhythmical, and sometimes alternates with verses. Also of the Tristubh metre which is often used in the Mahabharata, though the sloka is about twenty times as frequent as the Tristubh we find the ancient form still similar to the Vedic form, as well as later forms and even the elaborate metres of classical Sanskrit poetry are already to be found in certain parts of the Mahabharata\*. In the whole of Vedic literature there is no mention of the Mahabharata though in Brahmanas and Upanishads there is frequent talk of Akhyana Itihasa Purana and Gatha Samasamsa. Even of the Epic the Vedas hardly mention a word, which constitutes the central point of the Epic the kuru field in the kuru field the Veda says not a word though in the Brahmanas this very kuru field is so often mentioned as a place where gods and mortals celebrated great sacrificial feasts that this event, if it had already taken place would most certainly have been mentioned. It is true that Janamejaya, the son of Pariksha and Bhishma the son of Dusmanta and of Sakuntala, already appear in the Brahmanas and already in a kumtapa song of the Atharvaveda Pariksha is praised as a pious loving king under whose rule the land of the Kurus prospered. In the works belonging to the Yajurveda there is frequent mention of kurus and Panchal or kuru-panchala, and in connection with a sacrificial feast of the kuru-panchala in the old is told in the kathaka (X. 1) of Dhruvasutra the son of Vrihaspati. On the other hand nowhere in the whole Veda is the name of Pandu or of his sons the Pandavas to be found nowhere do such names as Durjodhana, Duhshanya, Karna etc. appear. The name Arjuna does it is true occur in a Brahmana, but as a proper name of the god Indra. The Samhitayana Samantasutra (X. 16) is the first place where a first mention of a war in Kurukshetra which was disastrous for the Kauravas. In the Asvalayana Grhyasutra Bharata and Mahabharata are mentioned in a list of teachers and sacred books which are honoured by libations at the end of the study of the Veda. Panini teaches the formation of the names 'Yudhis'hira' Bhima' and 'Vidura,' and the accent of the compound word 'Maha-bharata'. Patanjali, however is the first to make definite allusions to the story of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas†. The Indians call this Valmiki 'the first kavya or author of ornate poetry' (adikavya) and like to call the Ramayana 'the first ornate poem' (adikavya). The beginnings of ornate epic poetry do indeed lead back to the Ramayana and Valmiki has always remained the pattern to which all later Indian poets admiringly aspired. The essential factor of Indian ornate poetry, of the so-called 'kavya,' is that greater importance is attached to the form than to the matter and contents of the poem, and that so-called alamkara, i.e. 'embellishments', such as similes, poetic figures, puns, and so on, are used largely, even to excess. Similes are heaped on similes, and descriptions, especially of nature, are spun out interminably with ever new metaphors and comparisons. We find the first beginnings of these and other peculiarities of the classical ornate poetry in the Ramayana. While we found in the

\* Dr Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature" pages 461-462

† Dr Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," pages 470-471.

Mahabharata a mixture of popular epic and theological didactic poetry (Purana), the Ramayana appears to us as a work that is popular epic and ornate poetry at the same time \*\*

The Uttarakanda of the Ramayana forms part of the Bharata Samhita, according to Dr Winternitz —

"The thread of this narrative in Book VII is constantly interrupted by the interpolation of numerous myths and legends. There we find again the familiar legends of Yajati and Nahusa (VII, 18f), of the slaying of Britra by Indra, who by this becomes guilty of Brahman murder (VII, 84—87), of Urvasi the beloved of the gods, Mitra and Baruna, who in a marvellous manner begot the Rishis Vasistha and Agastya (VII, 96f) of king Ila who as the woman Ila bears Pururavas (VII, 97—99), and so on. Many truly Brahmanical legends with an exaggerated tendency compare well with similar stories of Book XIII of the Mahabharata. Thus the story of the ascetic Sambuka, belonging to the Sudra caste whose head Rama strikes off, for which he is commended by the gods, because a Sudra should not take it upon himself to practise asceticism or of the god who is compelled to eat his own flesh because, in a former incarnation, he practised ascotism, but omitted to make presents to the Brahmans (VII, 73—1) and similar 'edifying' legends. The whole of the book bears the character of the latest parts of the Mahabharata"†

The original Mahabharata is earlier than the Ramayana, It is clearly admitted by him —

"The Hindus declare the Ramayana to be earlier than the Mahabharata, because, according to the traditional list of Vishnu's incarnations, the incarnation as Rama preceded that as Krishna. This argument has no force, because in the old, genuine Ramayana, as we have seen, Rama does not as yet appear as an incarnation at all. It is a fact, however, that allusions to Vasudewa (Krishna), Arjuna and Yudhishthira, already occur in Panini's grammar, whereas Rama is not mentioned either by Panini or Patanjali, nor in inscriptions of the pre Christian era. It is likely, too, that the theory of incarnation arose out of the Krishna cult, and that the transformation of the hero Rama into an incarnation of Vishnu resulted only later, by analogy to the Krishna incarnation. A few scholars have declared the Ramayana to be the earlier of the two Epics, because the burning of widows does not occur in it, whilst it is mentioned in the Mahabharata. The fact of the matter however, is that in the old, genuine Mahabharata the burning of widows is just as much absent as in the genuine Ramayana, whilst there are allusions to it in the later portions of the Ramayana, though less frequent than in the Mahabharata‡. The orthodox Hindus themselves regard the Puranas as extremely ancient. They believe that the same Vyasa who compiled the Vedas and composed the Mahabharata was also, in the beginning of the Kaliyuga, the present age of the world, the author of the eighteen Puranas. But this Vyasa is a form of the exalted god Vishnu himself, 'for' (says the Vishnu Purana) 'who else could have composed the Mahabharata?' His pupil was the Suta Lomaharsana, and to him he imparted the Puranas. Thus the Puranas have a divine origin. And the Vedanta philosopher Sankara, for a proof of the personal existence of the gods, turns to Itihisas and Puranas, because

\* Dr Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," pages 175-476

† Dr Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," page 495

‡ Dr Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," page 505

these, as he says, rest not only upon the *Volas* but also upon sense perception, namely on the perception of people like *Vyasa*, who personally spoke with the gods.\* The *Puranas* are the old books of the second cycle. This is easily explained, for originally the *Puranas* were not properly literature at all. The *Sutas* or bards were undoubtedly the creators and bearers of the oldest *Purana* poetry as well as of the *Epic*. This is also borne out by the circumstance that in almost all the *Puranas* the *Suta* *Lomaharsha*—his real name was “the Sauter,” the son of the *Suta*—appears as narrator. This is so much the case that *Suta* and *Sauti* are used almost as proper names in the *Puranas*† but the *Suta* was certainly no Brahman, and he had nothing to do with the *Volas*‡.

Dr. Monier Williams holds that the original *Mahabharata* is one century older than the *Ramayana* (page 315 “*Indian Wisdom*”) and his view is supported by the editions as follows—

“The great *Itihasa* however is not a simple epic with a single subject as a vast cycle of legends, myths of Hindu mythology, legendary history, ethics and philosophy. The poem as we now possess it cannot possibly be regarded as representing the original form of the epic. The epic has apparently to have proceeded gradually from a certain *Volas* to a certain *Itihasa* already indicated (pages 319-20) it seems to have passed through a long process of construction and reconstruction until finally arranged and moulded into its present shape by a Brahman or Brahmins whose names have not been preserved. The relationship which the original Brahman compiler bore to the great gods and laws of India, many of them orally transmitted, and all attributed to the *Mahabharata* was similar to that borne by Pindaratus to the *Panegyrics*. In the *Itihasa* invest this personage, whoever he was, with a number of physical capacities, and credit that he was also the arranger of various other celebrated *Itihasas*, such as the *Volas* and *Puranas*. He is called *Vyasa*, but this is, of course, a coincidence, that comes from the Sanskrit verb *vyas*, meaning to dispose in regular sequence and therefore would be equally applicable to any compiler. Professor Lassen, in his *Indische Alterthumskunde* (II 139), now certainly comes to the conclusion that it may be proved from an examination of the introduction to the *Mahabharata* that there were three consecutive workings-up (*Uebersetzung*) of that poem by different authors. The first or oldest version, called simply *Bharata*, which contained only 1100 verses began with the history of Manu, the progenitor of the *Kshatriyas* or military class (*Adiparva* II 2) and a short section—describing the pedigree of *Vyasa*, and how he appeared at the Snake sacrifice, and how, at the request of Janamejaya, he commissioned *Vaisampayana* to relate the story of the strife between the *Paundras* and *Kauravas* (I 229 etc.)—might have formed the introduction (*Einleitung*) to this oldest *Itihasa*. The second reconstruction or recasting of the poem—though by Professor Lassen to be identical with the *Itihasa* mentioned in *Varahamihira's* *Brhat-Samhita*, and credit that *Samnaka's* horse sacrifice—took place about 490 B.C. It began with the history of King *Vasu*, whose daughter *Satyavati* was mother of *Vyasa*, and the section called *Paushya* (I 661), the antiquity of which is indicated by its being almost entirely in prose, might have served as its introduction. The section called *Pauloma* (I 851), probably formed the commencement of the third reconstruction of the great *Epic*, which he considers must have preceded the era of *Volas*. *Vyasa's* *Volas* *Yasurita* is named *Vyasa's* *amrita* (I 2117). It may seem strange that the compilation of wholly different works composed at very different epochs, such as the *Volas*, *Mahabharata* and *Puranas* undoubtedly were, should be

\* Dr. Winternitz “*A History of Indian Literature*”, page 527

† Do Do Do, page 523

‡ Dr. Monier Williams’ “*Indian Wisdom*” pages 371-72.

attributed to the same person, but the close relationship supposed by learned natives to subsist between these productions, will account for a desire to call in the aid of the same great sage in their construction" \*

It is necessary to mention here that all the Hindu Puranas and Upapuranas unanimously hold that Vyasa and Valmiki were the authors of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, respectively. There can hardly be much difference between the unanimous tradition recorded in the Puranas and the unbiassed views of the European scholars. It is admitted by all that Veda Vyasa, the author of the original Mahabharata, cannot be the author of the current Mahabharata, wherein Vyasa's work was spoilt by the different editors and revisers and rhapsodists from time to time. The actual incidents were altered with the introduction of fictitious characters to produce a dramatic effect on the audience. They either introduced new matter in the texts of the Mahabharata or altered them to suit their object without any regard to truth, religion or law.

It is not generally known what is the real meaning of the word 'GO', which is mentioned in the Mahabharata along with Brahmanā, for whose benefit it was written. Besides, Vasistha is said to have defeated Visvamitra through his Kama Dhenu (GO) or wish cow.

"Now the go (stoma) by means of the Cow (stoma) the Gods drove the Asuras away from these worlds. He who knows this drives his rival away from these worlds. Because they, the Gods, pushed (Agastya) away the Asuras from these worlds, thence its name 'GO'. He who knows this pushes away his evil rival" †

It is evident from these quotations that the fight between Visvamitra and Vasistha was more imaginary than real and the power of the Brahmanas rested with the successful rites and sacrifices to win success in the world and to be blessed with a good son and heir. Manu clearly defined that the system of Niyoga was not practised by the twice-born people and the sages cannot be accused of it.

In the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, it is said that Vasistha was instructed by Hiranya Garbha (Brahma), and from him Narada learnt.

"This knowledge was acquired from Hiranagarbha by the great Rishi Vasistha. From that foremost of Rishis, viz. Vasistha, it was acquired by Narada. From Narada I have acquired that knowledge which is truly at one with the eternal Brahma. Having heard this discourse of great import, couched in excellent words, do not, O foremost of the Kurus, give way any longer to grief" ‡

It is again said in Chapter CCCXL

"Having won the high favour that he had solicited, Narada also, gifted with great energy, then proceeded in all haste to the retreat called Vadari, for seeing Nara

\* Dr. Monier William's, (Indian Wisdom) page 372, footnote

† Pancarimsa Brahmana, page 423, para 1-4

‡ The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, page 485, verses 45-46, Chapter CCCIX.

and Narayana This great Upanishad, quite of a piece with the four Vedas, and the Sankhya Yoga, and called by him by the name of the Pancharatra Scriptures, and recited by Narayana himself with his own mouth, was repeated by Narada before a large audience in the residence of Brahman (his sire) in exactly the same way in which Narayana had recited it and in which he had heard it from his own lips .

Bhisma continued —I have now recounted to you the discourse that was recited by Narada That narrative has come down from person to person from very ancient times I heard it from my father who formerly recounted it to me . He knows that Narayana is the Supreme Soul, that He is the Supreme Lord, that He is the Creator of Brahman himself Narada recited this very ancient narrative, which is perfectly consistent with the Vedas, to that assembly of Rishis crowned with ascetic success that came to the abode of Brahman The god Suryya, having heard that narrative from those Rishis crowned with ascetic success, repeated it to the sixty six thousands of Rishis, O king, of purified souls, that follow in his train And the Sun, the deity that imparts heat to all the worlds, repeated that narrative to those Beings also, of purified souls, that have been created (by Brahman) for always travelling in the van of the Sun The great Rishis who follow in the Sun's train, O son, repeated that excellent narrative to the deities assembled on the breast of Meru. That best of ascetics, viz, the regenerate Asita, then, having heard the narrative from the gods, repeated it to the Pitris, O king of kings I heard it from my father Shantanu, O son, who recited it to me formerly Myself having heard it from my father, I have repeated it to you, O Bharata ”\*

It is repeated at the end of Chapter CCCXXXIV.

“The celestial Rishi Narada and the great Yogi Vyasa had again and again told all this to me in days of yore when the subject was suggested in course of conversation That person devoted to tranquility who hears this sacred history directed with the subject of Liberation is sure to acquire the highest end ”†

There is a clear reference to Rama as the incarnation of Narayana and the sages Ekata and Dwita appearing as powerful monkeys as his allies, the great heroes of the Ramayana in Chapter CCCXXXVII The sages Ekata, Dwita and Treta wanted to see Narayana, but were told to wait for the purpose

“O foremost of twice born ones, you have a great duty to perform After the expiration of this the golden age, when the Treta age comes in course of the Vivasvat cycle, a great calamity will befall the worlds You Munis, you shall then have to help the gods ”‡

The link is continued in the next Chapter CCCXL

“Towards the end of Treta and the beginning of Dwapara, I shall take birth as Rama the son of Dasaratha in Ikshaku's race At that time, the two Rishis, viz, the two sons of Prajapati, called by the names of Ekata and Dwita, will on account of the injury done by them to their brother Trita, have to take birth as monkeys, losing the beauty of the human form Those monkeys that shall take birth in the race of Ekata and Dwita, shall become endued with great power and mighty energy and will equal Shakra himself in power All those monkeys, O twice-born

\* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, page 543, Chapter CXXL, verses 106—108, 133, 113—119

† The Mahabharata, verses 40-41, Shanti Parva, page 533

‡ The Mahabharata, verses 53-54, Shanti Parva, page 540



one, will become my ally for performing the work of the gods. I shall then kill the dreadful king of the Rakshasas, that wretch of Pulastya's race, viz., the fierce Kavana that thorn of all the worlds, together with all his children and followers."

That Rama is Narayana's incarnation is clearly mentioned in the Ramayana Book I, Canto XVI. In Uttarakanda, Book VII, Canto 32, verse 11, Narayana was appealed to by Indra to kill Ravana. In the same book, Canto 84, Satrugha, brother of Rama, heard the true account of Rama made by Valmiki in verse 14. After the disappearance of Sita, Brahma appears to Rama in III Canto of the same book giving out that Valmiki "has prepared a Kavya, which, when you will hear, let you know who were you, what you did and what you will do, where everything is said." The Uttarakanda is therefore the prologue of the first six books of the Ramayana. The Narayana edition of the Mahabharata describes the four forms of righteousness, Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna.

"During the epoch of the self-creator Manu the eternal Narayana, the Soul of the universe, was born as the son of Dharma in a quadruple form, viz., as Nara, Narayana, Hari, and the self-creator Krishna."†

The Ramayana says the sons of Dasaratha were the four incarnations of Narayana

"Whon wisest Vishnu thus had given  
His promise to the Gods of heaven,  
He pondered in his secret mind  
A suitable place of birth to find  
Then he decreed, the lotus-eved,  
In four his being to divide,  
And Dasaratha, gracious king  
He chose as sire from whom to spring"‡

This establishes the Epic inter-relations and its source, as well as the aim of establishing the worship of true God, the eternal soul, or Purusha Vasudeva or Narayana. Vyasa, while instructing his son, referred to a work then existing where the duties superior to all have been laid down by the ancient sages in Chapter CCL (Shanti Parva), verse 2. In a previous Chapter CCXLVI, Vyasa said to his son that he had prepared a book for his instruction as follows—

"This treatise, O son, intended for your instruction, is the essence of all the Vedas. The truths expounded in it cannot be understood by the help of inference alone or by that of mere study of the scriptures. One must understand it himself by the help of faith. By churning the Riks contained in all religious works and in all treatises based on truth, as also the ten thousand hills, this ambrosia has been acquired. As butter from curds and fire from wood, so this has been raised for the sake of my son,—this which forms the knowledge of all truly wise men. This treatise, O son,

\* The Mahabharata, verses 82-85, Shanti Parva, page 547

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva Chapter CCCXXV, page 533, verses 8-9

‡ Mr. Griffith's "The Ramayana of Valmiki" page 26, Book I Canto XV

fraught with solid instruction, is intended for Brahmana who having studied the Vedas, have become house holders. It should never be delivered to one who is not of tranquil soul, or one who is not self controlled, or one who has not practised penances. It should not be delivered to one who is not conversant with the Vedas, or one who does not humbly wait upon his preceptor, or one who is not shorn of malice, or one who is not possessed of sincerity and candour, or one who is of reckless conduct. It should never be delivered to one whose intellect has been consumed by disputation, or one who is vile or low. This treatise containing the quintessence of duties, should be communicated to that person, however, who is possessed of fame, or who deserves praise, or who is of tranquil soul, or possessed of ascetic merit, to a Brahmana who is such to one's son or dutiful disciple, but on no account should it be delivered to others. If any person gives away the entire Earth with all her treasures to one conversant with truth, the latter should still consider the gift of this knowledge as very much superior to that gift " \*

Then he describes a subject which perhaps was not treated in his book. It is this —

"I shall now describe to you a subject which is a greater mystery than this, a subject connected with the Soul, which is above the ordinary understandings of human beings, which has been seen by the foremost of Rishis, what has been treated in the Upanishadas, and which forms the treatise of your enquiry " †

The book in question, which he referred to his son, seems to have been mentioned in the table of contents in the version of Sanjaya (verses 220 and 230, Adi Parva, Chapter I). It was a book being a discourse between Narada and King Saivya, who was afflicted with much grief at the loss of his children, where the history of the twenty-four ancient kings of great repute, who could not escape the hands of death, was given. Vyasa recited it to Dhritarastra when he was afflicted with great sorrow at the loss of his sons in the Great War of which Sanjaya was reminding the old king. It was said that the great Dvaipayana composed a holy Upanishada on these facts and it was published by the learned and sacred bards in the Puranas (verse 250). The book in question did not deal with the Pandavas or the Kurus but the twenty-four kings named in the discourse of Narada, who are as follows —

(1) Saivya, (2) Srinjaya, (3) Suhotra, (4) Rantideva, (5) Kakshivanta, (6) Damana, (7) Valhaka, (8) Sarjati, (9) Ajita, (10) Nala, (11) Visvamittra, (12) Ambarisha, (13) Marutta, (14) Manu, (15) Ikshaku, (16) Gaya, (17) Bharata, (18) Parasurama, (19) Rama, (20) Sasabindu, (21) Bhagiratha, (22) Kartabirjya, (23) Janmejaya and (24) Yayati

But besides these Vyasa mentioned the names of other kings, with Puru, Kuru, etc., who were equally powerful and virtuous but could not escape death, whereas the sons of Dhritarastra were wicked, envious and avaricious and yet their death could not affect the wise, intelligent

\* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXLVI, page 873, verses 13-20, Shanti Parva

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXLVI, page 873 verse 21, Shanti Parva

and learned, especially when everything was done for their safety and none could avert the decrees of fate by anything. Whatever time creates, it also destroys. They formed the theme of Vyasa's *Upanishad*. It is also mentioned in the table of contents that Vyasa composed at first a poem of 8,800 verses which could not be understood even by his son Suka or Sanjaya (verses 81-82, Chapter I, *Adi Parva*), so he revised it and made it of 24,000 verses. It is evident that Vyasa was guided by Narada's book or discourse on the twenty-four lings to overcome the grief of King Sarjya. It is clearly stated in the real introduction of the *Mahabharata* in the *Shanti Parva*, Chapter CCCXLVII, verses 8-11 as follows —

"Vaishampayana said — He who is our preceptor *viz.*, the Rishi Vyasa, the son of Gandharvati, has himself recited this narrative to us about the glory of Narayana, that glory which is the highest and which is immutable. I heard it from him and have recited it to you exactly as I heard it, O sinless one. This religion, with its mysteries and its abstract of details was won by Narada, O ling from that Lord of the universe, *viz.*, Narayana himself. From such are the particulars of this great religion. I have, before this O foremost of kings explained it to you in the *Hari Gita*, with a brief reference to its ordinances. Know that the island-born Krishna, otherwise called Vyasa, is Narayana on Earth. Who else than He, O foremost of kings, could compile such a work as the *Mahabharata*? Who else than that powerful Rishi could describe the diverse kinds of duties and religion for the observance and adoption of men."

Souti recites it again, as it should be, in the introduction in his version in the same chapter, verse 15, as follows —

"Narada had recounted it to Vyasa the great preceptor, and the sons of Pandu heard from him in the presence of Krishna and Bhishma."

Again it is mentioned in Chapter CCCXLIX (verses 81-88)

"When it becomes able to abstain entirely from acts, the twenty-fifth, *viz.*, the individual Soul, succeeds in attaining to the foremost of Beings which is highly subtle, which is invested with the quality of Goodness, and which is fraught with the essences symbolised by the three letters of the alphabet (*viz.* A U and M). The *Samkhya* system, the *Aranyaka Veda*, and the *Pancharatra* scriptures, are all identical and form parts of one whole. This is the religion of those who are devoted whole mindedly to Narayana,—the religion that has Narayana for its Soul. As waves of the ocean, rising from the ocean, rush away from it only to return to it in the long run, so various sorts of knowledge, originating from Narayana, return to Narayana in the end. I have thus explained to you, O Son of Kuru's race, what the religion of Goodness is. If you be qualified for it, O Bharata, do you practise that religion duly. Thus did the highly blessed Narada explain to my preceptor,—the Island-born Krishna—the eternal and immutable course called *Ekhanta*, followed by the Whites as also by Yatis. Pleased with Dharma's son Yudhishthira, Vyasa imparted this religion to king Yudhishthira the just, who was endued with great intelligence. Derived from my preceptor I have also communicated it to you. O best of kings, this religion is, for these reasons, highly difficult of practice. Others, hearing it, become as much stupi-

\* The *Mahabharata*, Chapter CCCXLVII, verses 8-11, page 571 *Shanti Parva*

fied as you have allowed yourself to be It is Krishna who is the protector of the universe and its beguler It is He who is the destroyer and the cause, O King ”\*

About his birth it was said he was born of the speech of Narayana “Bho,” whose original name was Saraswata but who passed by the name of Apantara-tamas (CCCL. Verses 37—40 and 57-58, Shanti Parva, p 582) The sage Apantaratamas was said to be the preceptor of the Vedas and was called by the name of Prachina-Garbha (CCCL, verse 65) There is a great resemblance in the number of verses (24000) in the two Indian Epics. (Ramayana Bk VII, Uttarakanda, 107 Canto, verse 25) Vyasa is said to have composed originally a poem called Bharata in 24000 verses, exclusive of episodes, where he described

“the divinity of Krishna, the goodness of the sons of Pandu against the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra, the virtue of Gandhari, constancy of Kunti, and wisdom of Bidura as well as the greatness of the Kuru race” †

Valmiki was said to be the tenth son of Paracheta (Jim Canto 109, verse 18) Nor is this all. It mentions two places, Vajayanta and Pratisthana, in Uttarakanda, Canto 65, verse 8, and Canto 66, verse 26, respectively, as the seats of Nimi and Pururava, the well-known progenitors of the Royal family Vajayanta was near the hermitage of Goutama In the Mahabharata CCLII, verses 9-10, mention is made of a king of Vajayanta where the illustrious god Brahman used to pass his time engaged in thinking on the course of spiritual science Janaka, king of that place, was famous for his spiritual emancipation and learning and his discourses formed the important lessons of the Mahabharata.

It is evident that the Epics bore a great resemblance in every way The moral was also the same (VII, Canto 62, verses 11-12) There is also a very important introduction of the Ramayana to be found connected with Narada in the Uttarakanda Ramayana, Book VII, XLVI Canto, like the Mahabharata, with white mountain residents and their worshipped deity Narayana and Ravana's decision to fight him Sita was kept in Ceylon like a mother by Ravana This is the discourse of Sanat Kumar to Narada and such a discourse is also extant in the Mahabharata. What is more, it is said that it should be read at the time of celebrating the Shraddha ceremony The Mahabharata's verse containing the contending characters is

“Durjodhana is a great tree created out of passion, Karna is its trunk, Sakuni is its branches, Dushasana is its fruit and flowers, and weak Dhritarastra is its root Yudhisthira is a great tree, created out of virtue and religion, Arjuna is its trunk; Bhima is its branches, two sons of Madri are its flowers and fruits, and Krishna, Brahma, and Brahmanas are its roots ”‡

\* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCCXLIX, Shanti Parva, page 530, verses 81—88

† The Mahabharata (Adi Parva, Chapter 1, verses 99-100)

‡ The Mahabharata (Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 108-109, page 4.

As a Mantra this is even now recited in Shraddha ceremonies along with the Birata Parva and Gita.

Narada was not only an interlocutor or adviser in the Brahmanas and Epics but was the author of many sacred books of Ancient India as well as one of the law-givers. Narada was the most learned and revered celestial sage and was closely connected with the authorship of the Epics. It is said that different men became the authors or reciters of the Mahabharata. It was Narada to the Devaloka, Asita-Devala to the Pitriloka, Sukra to the Gandharvas, Yakshas and Rakshasas and Vaisampayana to mankind. This means nothing but that the spiritual part of the book was treated by Narada. In the Brahmanas there are legends of great human interest. Atitareya is one of the most important of the two Brahmanas attached to the Rig Veda. King Harish Chandra's story on the question of a son is important and Narada spoke on the important topic of having a son in Chapter III, Book VII of Atitareya Brahmana, translated by Dr Macdonell as follows —

"Food is man's life and clothes afford protection,  
Gold gives him beauty, marriages bring cattle  
His wife's a friend, his daughter causes pity;  
A son is like a light in highest Heaven."

This was the age of the Brahmanas when human sacrifice was prohibited by higher knowledge and through the power of concentration in a prayer of Sunahshepa, whom Visvamitra adopted as his son on finding him fit and worthy for the post of a priest. In the Epic <sup>and the sons of Paul</sup> India, Narada became the consoler of kings and s. <sup>grieved by the loss of their children</sup> Narada <sup>appears</sup> different role. Vyasa is called Dvaipayana-Vyasa. <sup>Brahma appeared, and the contents of his poem</sup> follows —

"It contains the mystery of the Vedas and other subjects <sup>as</sup> <sup>is highly</sup> <sup>taught with</sup> <sup>and been explained</sup> by me; it contains the various hymns of the Vedas, Upanishadas with their Angas And a compilation of the Puranas, and the history which has been composed by me and named after the three divisions of time, namely, Past, Present and Future."

But later on in verse 94, where he is called Krishna-Dvaipayana, he appeared as the father of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura and did not publish his book till they died. This is absolutely contradictory to all that is disclosed in the Mahabharata. The quotations given just before on the point need no further repetition.

The Mahabharata still enjoys a place of honour in the religious ceremonies of the Hindus, especially in Bengal. Even illiterate ladies

\*Dr A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," page 208

†The Mahabharata, page 3, Adi Parva, verses 62-63.

can recite the poems of Kalidasa, which they have learnt by heart, and can discourse on the subjects of the Mahabharata. The rhapsodists have almost disappeared, but Jatras enliven people with stories of the Epic, which formed the innocent religious amusement of the Hindus. If such a book is translated it can better be imagined than described how it hurts the sentiments of the Hindus. The author Vyasa is still considered as the true incarnation of God and he is worshipped in the heart of hearts of all Hindus. They do not believe him to be of impure birth, which the enemies of all great men ascribe to them unjustly. The greatness of a man is to be judged by the gravity of his enemies. Vyasa and Valmiki, as the authors of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are instilled in the minds of the Hindus, male and female, young and old, literate and illiterate, if the truth be told. However, an honest attempt to arrive at the truth is being made as far as practicable.

The current Mahabharata begins with Sounakas twelve years sacrifice and with Souti reciting the Mahabharata there. It is not mentioned what sacrifice it was and in whose honour it was held and for what purpose, but so far as it can be ascertained from its close resemblance, it was a twelve year rite of Prajapati, whose description is given here below.—

"Three years consisting of nine-versed-days, three years of fifteen-versed, three years of seventeen-versed, three years of twenty one-versed days. (This is the twelve-years-rite of Prajapati. By means of this (sattra), Prajapati came into the state of setting in motion the whole (universe). They who perform this (sattra) come into the (state of) setting in motion the whole (universe). In that three years are nine-versed, the nine-versed (stoma) being splendour and priestly lustre, they obtain splendour and priestly lustre. In that three years are fifteen-versed, the fifteen-versed (stoma) being might and strength, they obtain might and strength. In that three years are seventeen-versed, the seventeen-versed (stoma) being food, they obtain food. In that three years are twenty-one-versed, the twenty-one-versed (stoma) being a firm support, they obtain, at the end of the sacrifice, a firm support. By means of this (sattra), the inhabitants of Naimisa thrive in all possible ways. They who undertake this rite thrive in all possible ways. They broke off the sattra, after the seventeen-versed years. They said 'He who among our progeny will thrive he shall finish this sattra.' Therefore, the Brahmins perform this sattra, wishing to finish it."

The sacrifice referred to therein was the snake sacrifice of Janmejaya. It has been shown that this Janmejaya could not be Janmejaya Parikshit, for if he was Bhishma could not have cited the discourse as an ancient account, for he died long before Janmejaya Parikshit's time. There is also mention of the great kings ascending to Heaven for their sacrifice of great merit in Chapter CCXXXIV (Shanti Parva) and

amongst them the work of Janmejaya is mentioned as follows in the version of Vyasa —

“By giving away his ear rings, Savitri, and by giving away his own body king Janmejaya both proceeded to high regions of felicity.”\*

“Sudasa Vasistha is not alluded to in Puranic tradition, but is mentioned in three stories in the Epic, if he was the Vasistha who is connected with Samvarana in them, namely, how Samvarana was driven out of his kingdom of Hastinapura by a Panchala king (who was Sudasa) and after obtaining ‘Vasisthas’ aid recovered his kingdom. There was a long interval with many kings between Sudasa (Sudasa) of N. Panchala and Shantanu and it is impossible that Sakti son Parasara of Sudasa’ time could have been Vyasa’s father. Vyasa then was the son of a Parasara, but not of Parasara Sakti. Hence there must have been two Parasaras.”†

Sameness of name was well known among kings and princes, for it is expressly declared that there were a hundred Prativindhya, Nagas, Haihayas, Dhritarastras, Brahmadattas, Paulas, Syotas, Kasis and Kusas, eighty Janmejayas, a thousand Sasabandus and two hundred Bhismas and Bhimas also that there were two Nalas, one king of Ayodhya and the other the hero of the ‘Story of Nala’, so there were two famous Arjunas, Kartavirya and Pandava, and a third in Rig Veda i, 222, 5”‡

“The Vedarthadipika on the same hymn tends to confirm this doubt, for it specifies ‘Vasistha’ as Maitravaran, calls the nine others ‘sons of Vasistha’, yet makes no reference to Parasara, who as author of 11 verses was more important than any of them, thus suggesting that it was not clear who this Parasara was. Those nine Vasisthas were not all sons of one Vasistha, for Upamanyu was Indrapramita’s grandson, as will appear, and the Vedarthadipika says they composed their verses all quite independently.”§

The family of Brihaspati performed a thirty-six year sacrifice and were blessed with ten sons (Panchavimsa Br XXV 7, p. 632). It is said whoever undertook this rite, ten strong sons were born to him. There is no wonder that five Pandavas were born to Pandu by performance of a rite.

That erudite Indian student of the Mahabharata, Professor Vaidya, in his history of Sanskrit Literature, Vedic period, says —

“Badarayana is an Angirasa and not a Vasistha and hence is different from Draupayana Vyasa, who is a Parasara or Vasistha. But the Pravara is the same in both of them, and they began with Bhrigu, who, though not one of the Sap tarshis, seems to be the oldest or highest Rishi as all Pravara enumerations begin with him.”

His ground for holding this view is not tenable, as he quotes Gita in the version of Krishna, who was descended from the Bhrigu and therefore he naturally called himself “amongst the sages he is Bhrigu.” Besides, he himself mentions later on in page 83

\* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXXXIV, page 357, verse 24

† Professor Pargiter’s “Ancient Indian Historical Tradition,” pages 210 and 211

‡ Professor Pargiter’s “Ancient Indian Historical Tradition,” page 120.

§ Professor Pargiter’s “Ancient Indian Historical Tradition,” page 212.

|| C V Vaidya’s “History of Sanskrit Literature” Vedic Period’ page 80. Chapter VI.

"Parasaras, whose Pravara is composed of Parasara, Sakti and Vasistha (all Rig Vedic Rishis), are said to be of various colours, viz, Krishna (black), Gour (white), Nila (blue), Sveta (white) and Shyama (dark), and under each head five new Gotras are given in Anushtubh verses. A family is mentioned which is Vasistha by day and Kasyapa by night and their Pravara is given as Kasyapabatsurbasistha. This is absurd, as Pravara always indicated descent and not discipleship."

If it is so, according to his own view, it must follow that when the Pravara of Badarayana and Dvaipayana Vyasa is the same they cannot be different.

"The Panini Gotra is given under Vatsas and Bhṛigu Pañcha-Pravara. This makes this list later than Panini or 300 B. C., for Panini is not a Gotra under any other list. Valmiki is also given under the same Gotra heading. Dirghatama is an Angirasa Kakshivata and Ushanasa is an Angirasa Gautama, Sungha is a Bharadraja and Koutsa is an Angirasa Yauvanasya. Asvalayana has one Pravara only viz, Vasistha, and Paippaladas are kunda Vasisthas."†

It is evident that Apantaratama is called Narayana's incarnation and was Badarayana, who in a later edition of the Mahabharata was designated as Dvaipayana Vyasa. The said Apantaratama was called Angirasa in the edition of the Bharata published by Brihaspati and nothing else, as there is a clear mention that Brihaspati did so in the Mahabharata. The Purusha Sukta X 90 is attributed to Narayana and it seems to distinguish the deity Narayana from Nara; this hymn is connected with Nara. The Mahabharata mentions four Gotras, and excluded Goutama, who plays so important a part in the Epics, and for this whatever he says cannot be taken as gospel truth. Nor would it be right to construe or infer that they were the only family of priests who had influence on the Royal families of India who ruled. It is impossible to agree with the learned Vaidya as well as to ascribe imaginary authorship to the tenth Mandala simply because the authors are Kavasha Ailusha (X31) Aruna Vaitahavya. His conclusion that Badarayana Vyasa, author of the Vedanta Sutras, was different from Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa is not supported by cogent reasons and is against Indian tradition, which he himself admits in page 51 as follows —

"The Indian tradition, therefore, namely that Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa made the Vedic compilations before the Satapatha, the oldest Brahmana, was composed in about 3000 B. C., may be accepted as reliable. We cannot further hold that the Rig Veda in its compiled form was before the authors of the Yajur's formulae or Saman verses. For these two were also collected into Samhitas by Vyasa at the same time from the floating material then existing. These two Vedas, no doubt, contain many verses from the Rig Veda almost everywhere, but it is not necessary to suppose that they take them from the compiled Rig Veda. They could do so from hymns as they then separately existed among the Indo-Aryans."

\* C. V. Vaidya's "History of Sanskrit Literature" Vedic Period

† C. V. Vaidya's "History of Sanskrit Literature" Vedic Period





"While accepting the tradition of the compilation of the Vedas by Vyasa we may, however, reject that part of it which credits him with compiling the Atharva text also, for we have seen that originally there were three Vedas only, the Atharva Veda being put together later."

"The Sukla Yajurveda arises after Vyasa had compiled the Rig Veda, the Krishna Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda, as its very tradition (which will be given later on) indicates."

It is evident Badarayana Vyasa is only distinct from Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa so far as the composition of the books Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata are concerned. Badarayana was the title of Vyasa when he published Brahma Sutra and published the Mahabharata and not as the author of the older Bharata. Badarikasrama is a famous shrine where Hindus in large numbers flock to worship Narayana in spite of its great inaccessibility and travelling difficulties sometimes resulting in death. Vyasa is immortal. The name of Parasurama, though said to be immortal, is found in the list of 24 kings who passed away as mortals just before quoted from the table of contents. There can be no two Vyasas or a Vyasa who was really living as immortal even for a very long time like Markendeya sage Vyasa, it is said, established Narayana in the Himalayas and taught his disciples Shanti Parva.

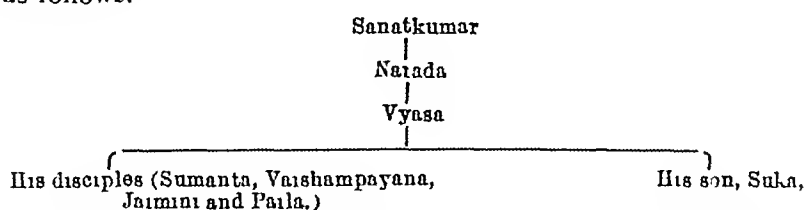
"Living on the side of that foremost of mountains Mahadewa of great rows scorched the gods greatly. At the foot of those mountains, in a retired spot, Parashara's son of great ascetic merit, i.e., Vyasa, taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were the highly blessed Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Jaimini of great wisdom, and Paila of great ascetic merit. Suka went to that charming asylum where his father, the great ascetic Vyasa, was living surrounded by his disciples."†

Badrika was the Ashrama of Vyasa. It is said in the Mahabharata that he lived in the Himalayas. The Mahabharata first grew out of a smaller work of 8800 verses and then of 24000 verses, as is distinctly told in the survey of contents. It is significant that there is a variation in the 1st and 2nd Chapters, so far as the survey and synopsis of contents are concerned, in the current Mahabharata. The origin of the name of the Mahabharata is not uniform but is given differently in different places. At the end of the table of contents it is said that the four Vedas were found light in substance and gravity of importance in the scale of weight. In Chapters LXII and CCIX the name is derived from the great deeds of the Bharata Royal family of kings in India. Everywhere Vyasa is spoken of as its author and that it took him three years to write. The line of discipleship is clearly

\*Prof C V Vaidya's "History of Sanskrit Literature", pages 52-53 (South period.)

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCCXXVIII, Shanti Parva, verses 24-27

given in the Shanti Parva, Chapters CCCXXVIII and CCCXXX, which is as follows.—



It is clearly stated that the great discourse having Narayana for its theme was repeated to the sages assembled at the sacrifice of Saunaka at Naimisaranya, which Vyasa had previously heard from Narada (in Chapter CCCXLVI, Shanti Parva, verses 13—15), who recited it to the Pandavas. It is repeated in Chapter CCCXLIX, verses 11 and 12, and again in the same chapter, verses 64 and 65, etc., 81 to 88, that it was Vyasa who initiated Yudhishthira in the religion of Narayana, which was the aim and object of the original Bharata Samhita to which the Mahabharata owes its origin. This was the Narayana section of the Mahabharata.

Every chapter has a colophon distinguishing it from others. The Pandavas and Kurus were never the heroes of the Bharata Samhita, which Vyasa had first composed under instructions from Narada. Suka was enlightened by his father Vyasa and Narada, which might have been included in the Bharata Samhita as well as the discourse between Asita Devala and Jaigishavya in the same Parva, Chapter CCXXIX as the sages Suka and Devala are mentioned as the reciters of the book in Chapter I, verse 106. The revisers of the Mahabharata seem to be Vaishampayana, his great nephew, Yajnavalkya, and Sounaka, as is clearly mentioned in the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLII, verses 12 and 13. The name of Sattwata referred to in the verse owes its origin to the Narayana episode in Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLIX.

"Addressing Brahman, the Supreme Narayana said,—'Do you, O son, create all kinds of creatures from your mouth and feet. O you of excellent vows, I shall do what will be good for you for I shall impart to you both energy and strength sufficient to make you competent for this work. Do you receive also from me this excellent religion known by the name of Sattwata. Helped by that religion do you create the golden age and ordain it duly. Thus addressed Brahman bowed his head to the illustrious Harimedhas and received from him that foremost of all religions with all its mysteries and abstract of details together with the Aranyakas,—the religion which originated from the mouth of Narayana.'"

As regards Yajnavalkya, it is found in Chapter CCCXIX of Shanti Parva —

"I obtained the Yajushes, O king, from the sun god. With the hardest penances I formerly adored the heat giving god. O sinless one, please I with me, the powerful

\*The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLIX, verses, 28, 29 and 30, page 577

sun, addressed me, saying — 'O regenerate Rishi, pray for the boon you covet, however difficult it may be of a question. I shall with cheerful mind, grant it to you. It is very difficult to make me grant grace.' Having to him with my head, I addressed that foremost of heat giving luminaries thus — 'I have to a kno ledge, of the Yajushes. I wish to know them forthwith. The holy one, thus solicited told me, — 'I shall grant you the Yajushes. Make up of the season of speech, the goddess of learning Saraswati will enter into your person.' The God then ordered me to open my mouth. I did as I was commanded. The goddess Saraswati then entered into my body, O sinless one. At this, I began to burn. Unable to suffer the pain I plunged into a river. Not understanding what the great sun had done for me for my well being. I became over angry with him. While I was burning with the energy of the goddess, the holy sun told me — 'Do you suffer this burning sensation for only a little time. That will soon come to an end and you will be cool. Indeed, I became cool. Beholding me restored to ease, the maker of light said to me, — 'The whole Vedas, with its appendix, together with the Upanishads, will appear in you by inward light, O twice born one. You will also edit the entire Satapathas, O foremost of twice born ones. After that, your understanding will turn to the path of Liberation. You will also acquire that end which is desirable and which is coveted by both Sankhyas and Yogins. Having said so the divine sun proceeded to the setting hills. Hearing his last words and after he had departed from where I was, I came home in joy and then remembered the goddess Saraswati. Thought of by me, the auspicious Saraswati appeared immediately before my eyes adorned with all the vowels and the consonants and having placed the syllable OM in the van. I then, according to the ordinance, offered to the goddess the usual Arghya and dedicated another to the sun, that foremost of all heat giving gods. Doing this duty I took my seat, devoted to both these gods. Thereupon the entire Satapatha Brahmanas, with all their mysteries and with all their abstracts as also their appendices, appeared of themselves before my mind's eye, at which I became filled with great joy. I then taught them to a hundred competent disciples and thereby did what was disagreeable to my great maternal uncle (Vaishampayana) with the disciples round him. Then, shining in the midst of my disciples like the sun himself with his rays, I took the management of the sacrifice, of your noble father, O king. In that sacrifice, a quarrel arose between me and my maternal uncle as to who should be allowed to take the sacrificial fee that was paid for the recitation of the Vedas. In the very presence of Devata I took half of that fee. Your father and Sumanta and Paala and Jaimini and other ascetics all agreed to that arrangement. I had thus got from the sun the five times ten Yajushes. O king. I then studied the Puranas with Romaharshana. Keeping before me these Mantras and the goddess Saraswati, I then, O king, helped by the inspiration of the sun, set myself to compile the excellent Satapatha Brahmanas and succeeded in performing the task never before undertaken by anyone else. That path which I had wished to take, has been taken by me and I have also taught it to my disciples. Indeed I gave to my disciples the whole of those Vedas with their abstracts. Pure in mind and body, all those disciples have on account of my instructions, become filled with joy. Having established this knowledge consisting of fifty branches which I had acquired from the sun, I now meditate on the great object of that knowledge (viz., Brahma). The Gandharva Vishwadeva, a master of the Vedanta Shastra desirous, O king, of ascertaining what is good for the Brahmanas in this knowledge and what truth is in it, and what is the excellent object of this knowledge, once catechised me."

It is interesting that Vyasa, Dhaumya, Yajnavalkya and Paala officiated in Yudhisthira's sacrifices of Rik-suya and Asvamedha, *vide*

Sava Parva, Chapter XXXIII, verses 35-36 and Aswamedha Parva, Chapter LXXII, verse 3. In the next chapter it is said that a disciple of Yajnavalkya proceeded with Ajuna to perform Vedic auspicious rites to protect him. It is evident Yajnavalkya was also a student of Vyasa efficient in sacrificial rites, and used to perform these rites on behalf of the Pandas, but his uncle Vaishampayana is nowhere mentioned in this connection. In the Aswamedha ceremony the name of Dhaumya was not found. As regards Saunaka, Professor Max Muller's 'Ancient Sanskrit Literature' gives a very interesting account regarding the edition of the Mahabharata with Harivamsa.

"Shridharmasishya in his commentary on Jatyayana's Sarvanukrama, says— 'Sunahotra, the great Muni was born of Bharadvaja, and of him was born Sunahotra, all the world being a witness. Indra himself went to the sacrifice of the Rishi in order to please him. The great Asuras, thinking that Indra was alone, and wishing to take him surrounded the sacrificial enclosure. Indra however, perceived it, and taking the guise of the Rishi he went away. The Asuras seeing the sacrificer again, seized Sunahotra, taking him for Indra. He saw the god that is to be worshipped, and saying 'I am not Indra, there he is, ye fools, not I', he was released by the Asuras. Indra called and spoke to him 'Because thou delightest in praising, therefore thou art called Gritsamada, O Rishi thy hymn will be called by the name of Indragya Indriyam, the might of Indra. And thou, being born in the race of Bhrgu shalt be Saunaka, the descendant of Sunaka and thou shalt see again the second Mandala, together with that hymn.' He, the Muni Gritsamada, was born again, as commanded by Indra. It was he who saw the great second Mandala of the Rig Veda as it was revealed to him together with the hymn Sajanaya, it was he, the great Rishi to whom at the twelve years' sacrifice Ugrasrava, the son of Ramaharsana, the pupil of Vyasa, recited, in the midst of the sacrifice, the story of the Mahabharata, together with the tale of the Harivamsa a story to be learnt from Vyasa alone, full of every kind of excellence, dear to Hari sweet to hear, endowed with great blessing. It was he who was the lord of the sages, dwelling in the Naimishya Forest. He, who to the king Satanika, the son of Janmejaya, brought the laws of Vishnu which declare the powers of Hari. That Saunaka, celebrated among the Rishis as the glorious having seen the second Mandala, and heard the collection of the Mahabharata being also the propagator of the laws of Vishnu the great boat on the ocean of existence was looked upon by the great Rishis as the only vessel in which worshippers might get over the Bahvricha, with its twenty one Sakhas, like one who had crossed the Rig Veda."

These revisers and editors of the Mahabharata did not clearly give their names, but preserved intact the name of the author with great respect. They are for the first time traced out with great labour as far as possible and practicable. There are others who embellished it with enormity. It is almost impossible to unravel their names; but this much can be said with certainty, that the Sutas, Ugrasrava and his son Romaharsana, introduced a hero of their race in Karna as the principle actor if not all in all in their edition of the Mahabharata. Karna, Bhishma and others were fictitious characters to make the work dramatic and sensational. It is impossible that the Royal Kshatriya

family of Ancient India, who took strong exception to Krishna's place of honour in Yudhishthira's Rajasuya, would accord a Suta hero a place of honour and kingdom. It was for this that a cock and bull story was invented that Karna was a son of Kunti in her maidenhood, that Krishna tried to bribe him and failed and, what is more that Yudhishthira, when he came to know about it, mourned and cursed women that they were not able to keep anything secret. This is quite contrary to the survey of contents of the Mahabharata, where the constancy of Kunti was praised and was one of the principal themes of the Mahabharata and there was no mention of Rama. In the last edition of the Mahabharata, which is nothing but a drama, Karna was introduced as the mainstay of the Kurus in their fight with the Pandavas. It will be seen that colophons at the end of chapters give important clues to the discovery of facts. For instance the word Kathanubandha in Chapters 59 and 60, Adī Parva, means a prologue with which one edition of the Mahabharata of Vyasa begins and its table of contents is given in the next Chapter 61 with the colophon 'Bharata Sutra' or table of contents, which is very important.

There is no mention of Bhishma, Drona or Kripa and their great fight with the Pandavas. Karna's name is not mentioned as a warrior or hero, equal to Arjuna if not greater than him, as is represented in the current Mahabharata, but as one of the evil counsellors of Duryodhana, who tried to decimate the Pandavas. There is no mention of Draupadi's five husbands or Arjuna's other marriages than with Subhadra. There was no mention of Salva or Jayadratha or Vagadatta on the side of the Kurus as great warriors, nor was there anything said about Dristadyumna, Shikandi, Birata or Satyaki on the side of the Pandavas. There is no mention of the incidents of the Birata Parva, how the Pandavas disclosed themselves in the dramatic way in the fight described in that Parva like Svayambara. There is no mention of the peculiar births of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Bidura or those of their children, although there is given the kind of persecutions to which the young Pandavas were subjected in the Kuru Court ending with the lac house as well as Bhima's marriage with Hidimba and killing the Baka demon at Ekchakra.

Yajnavalkya's edition begins with Astika Parva, whereas that of Saunaka naturally starts with the Poulami Parva account of the Bhṛigu. The next edition of the Mahabharata came into being at the time of King Janmejaya. It is evident from Chapter 62, Adī Parva, with which the book begins. Another edition of king Satanika begins with Sambhava Parva. Sauti's edition is the current Mahabharata. The introduction of new matters begins with the significant word

"Hanta" in all beginnings, which must have been seen. In all the following beginnings it is found —

Adi Parva	Chapter	53	Verse	4
Do	do	59	do	9
Do	do.	65	do.	9*
Do	do.	86	do.	10
Do	do.	94	do.	4

The Sanskrit Lexicon bears out that it is so. It is not confined to one Adi Parva only, but is found elsewhere in several Parvas

Drona Parva	Chapter	II	Verse	1
Do	do	84	do	1
Karna Parva	do	45	do	1.
Shanti ..	do	163	do	6
Do	do	195	do	1
Do	do	340	do	18
Do	do	342	do	2

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\*The annotator Vilkantha says that the word is used in the beginning of an episode

## INTERPOLATIONS AND REVISIONS.

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The Indian Epics are not histories in the true sense of the word so far as the material world is concerned, but they are of the spiritual and religious world

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana in their first conception were meant to pay off the debts or obligations to deities, sages and parents by sacrifices both in the spiritual and material worlds by Devayajna and Pitruyajna

It is evident that ancient kings and sages were mindful of the need to prolong the lives of humanity in every way. In the Ramayana the great hero Rama went to the forest as he was to be installed on the throne by royal declaration, only in order to relieve his father from the debt of a boon he had promised to his wife Kaikeyi, who is represented as Jara, according to the Hindu Institute. Similarly, Puru absolved his father from the curse of Devayajna's father.

Indra, the Vedic God, plays an important part in the Epics of India. The son of Ravana, Meghnada, was the conqueror of Indra, and the king Uparichara Bhisoma was the introducer of the ceremony of Indradvaja and was latterly converted into a worshipper of Narayana, with whose account the Mahabharata begins. The Soubhara Samhita says that Indra worshipped Vishnu, and the gods assembled christened the place with the name of Indraprastha. Arjuna worshipped Siva and was initiated in the use of arms and got the special weapon called Pasupat, which made him the greatest hero of the age. Karna and Arjuna were said to have been the sons of the Sun and Indra, respectively. Yajnavalkya was the nephew of Vrishampayana and worshipped the Sun. The Pandavas were credited with the founding of Indraprastha and worshipped the Vedic gods. Maya Danaba, who was released, did the Pandavas great service by building their city of palaces at Indraprastha. In the Ramayana, Maya is said to be the father-in-law of Ravana and he seems to have been the author of the moral lesson as there is a reference to this in the Mahabharata.

Risabh, the son of Nabhi, married the daughter of Indra Jayanti, whose elder son was Bharata to whom the name Bharatbarsha owed its origin.

Risabh might be called the founder of the Jain religion and his discourse in the Shanti Parva, Chapter CXXVII, refers to Narayana and the

story of king Viradyumna, stricken with grief for the loss of his son Bhuridyumna. The distressed king saw his son and realised that there was nothing so distressing as disappointment. He alone who could conquer hope could be happy. He renounced worldly enjoyments and became an ascetic or religious devotee. The table of contents states that a king in similar circumstances heard the accounts of kings from Narada (Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 225—230), and Shanti Parva practically begins with that account in the version of Krishna in Chapter XXIX.

Narada's description to Sanjaya reveals one important truth which was misrepresented in regard to sacred Ganga. The account of Bhagiratha was foisted upon king Pratipa, father of Santanu. The quotations will speak for themselves.

"Ganga, named Bhagrathi, sat upon the lap of this king living near the stream, and therefore, passed by the name of Urvashi. The Ganga, who had three courses, had agreed to be the daughter of Bhagiratha of Ikshaku's race, who always celebrated sacrifices with enough presents to the Brahmanas \*.

"There was a king, named Pratipa, engaged in doing good to all creatures. He spent many years in ascetic penances, going to the source of (the river) Ganga. The accomplished and beautiful Ganga, in the form of a tempting woman, rose from the water and came to the king. That beautiful featured lady, that intelligent celestial maiden, endowed with ravishing beauty, sat upon the right thigh of the king, which was like a Sal tree. Thereupon, the king Pratipa asked that famous one, 'O fortunate lady, what good can I do to you and which you desire?' The maiden said, 'O King, I desire to have you. I offer myself,—accept me. To reject a woman who is full of desire is never considered good by the wise.' Pratipa said, 'O beautiful lady, I never go to another man's wife out of lust. O fortunate maiden, this is my solemn vow.'†

Nor is this all. Yajati did not deprive his sons of their legitimate shares and was more virtuous, wise, wealthy and forbearing than Srinjaya. His realm reached the very shores of the sea. Puru was only given the throne on which he sat (Chapter XXIX, Shanti Parva, verses 94—99).

Prithu first received the title of king, the name Kshatriya originated from him, meaning the protector of people, and the subjects were devoted to him as the great advancer of all things, as the very name Prithu implied. He was installed at the forest of Dandakaranya by the sages. The king Danda was cursed by Bhrigu for ravishing his daughter Arayya (Ramayana VII, Uttarakanda, Cantos 93-94). This was referred to in the Mahabharata by the famous chaste lady in Bana Parva, Chapter CCV, verses 25—28.

"O Brahmana, O sinless one, you should forgive this fault of mine. I know the energy of the Brahmanas, as also the superior position of those who are possessed

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\* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva Chapter XXIX, page 38, verses 68-69.

† Page 142, Adi Parva, Chapter XVII verses 1—6.



of great intelligence. By their wrath the ocean was made brackish and undrinkable. (I know also the energy of) the sages, blazing with asceticism, and who are possessed of restrained souls. The fire of their wrath has not been appeased as yet in the wood Dandaka. Owing to his disregard of the Brahmanas, the evil minded Vatapi, the crooked, but great Asura, having a lance to the sage Agasthya was digested by him. Thus the superior energy of the high souled Brahmanas has been heard."

This story seemed to have appeared in different garb in the Shanti Parva as a Tuladhara and Jyoti discourse. The word Dharma Byadha is significant as the reader of lectures to Kousika in Bharata Parva. The lessons are very important, coming as they do from the mouth of Markandeya, a descendant of the Bhṛigu family. Bhṛigu was the author of the codes of morality. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata and there is a big discourse between Bhṛigu and Bharadvaja in Shanti Parva. In Chapters XXIII and LVII Brihaspati and Sukra recited the self-same moral lesson to a king in verses 14 and 3, respectively.

"The earth devours a king averse to fight, and a Brahman, fond of his wife and children."

It is evident that they were guided by one book of Narayana, the Bharata Samhita. Chapter LVII, verses 3-14, describes the strong rules of conduct which used to guide the kings and sages in Ancient India.

"He, who acts inimically towards your kingdom consisting of seven limbs, should be killed, may he be your preceptor or friend. There is an ancient Shloka recited by king Marutta quite of a piece with Brihaspati's view, O king, about the duty of kings. According to the scriptural injunction there is punishment for even the preceptor if he becomes haughty and disregarding of his duty, and if he transgresses all restrictions. Valu's son, the highly intelligent king Sagara from desire of doing good to the citizens, banished his own oldest son Asamanjas. Asamanjas, O king, used to drown the children of the citizens in the Sarayu. His father, therefore, remonstrated with and exiled him. The Rishi Uddalaka renounced his favourite son Svetaketu, of rigid penances, because the latter used to invite Brahmanas with false promises of entertainment. To make their subjects happy, to observe truth and to act sincerely are the eternal duties of kings. The king should not hanker after the wealth of others. He should in time give what should be given. If the king becomes endued with prowess, truthful in speech and forgiving in temper he would never be shorn of prosperity. With soul purged of sins the king should be able to govern his anger and all his conclusions should be according to the scripture. He should also always follow morality, worldly profit, pleasure and emancipation. The king should always keep his counsels close regarding these three. No greater misfortune can betake the king than the giving out of his counsels."

"The following verse was recited in days of Yore by Ushanas of Bhṛigu's race, in the narrative called Ramacharita, on the subject, O Bharata of royal duties. One should first select a king. Then should he select a wife, and then acquire wealth. If there be no king what would become of his wife and properties? About those who seek kingdom, there is no other eternal duty than the protection (of subjects). The protection the king grants to his subjects maintains the world. Manu, the son of Prachetas, recited these two verses regarding the duties of kings. Listen to them with attention. These six persons should be shunned like a leaky boat on

the sea, viz., a preceptor who does not speak, a priest who has not studied the Scriptures, a king who does not give protection, a wife who utters disagreeable words, a cow-herd who likes to rove within the village and a barber who wishes to go to the forest " \*

This is the aim of the ancient Rama-Charita or the Ramayana, but the current Ramayana does not fulfill it. It will be seen that what the famous Gautama Buddha preached was nothing new, for it is found in the Mahabharata —

"The Fowler said —O foremost of the regenerate ones, sacrifice, gift, austerity, the study of the Vedas, and truthfulness, these five holy things are always noticed in a virtuous conduct. Having control over desires, anger, haughtiness, avarice, and wickedness, those who take pleasure in virtue because it is virtue, are, in the opinion of the honest and wise, really reckoned to be virtuous. Those persons who perform sacrifices and are ever devoted to the study of Vedas, have no behaviour other than what are practised by the virtuous. Indeed good behaviour forms the second attribute of the pious. O Brahmana, rendering services to the superiors, truthfulness, wrathlessness and gift,—these four are ever present in those, who are really virtuous. One can wholly obtain credit by directing the heart towards virtuous behaviour. This he gains only by practising the above four, otherwise to gain this becomes impossible. Truth constitutes the essence of the Vedas. Control over passions constitutes the essence of truth, and self-denial (refraining from the worldly enjoyments) forms the essence of self-control. These attributes are always present in virtuous conduct †

"The explanation of virtue is three fold. The first is called the supreme virtue, which is inculcated in the Vedas. The second is what is laid down in Dharmashastras. The third is called the honest behaviour, which is observed by the pious. Crossing over (the ocean of knowledge, the performance of ablutions in the places of pilgrimage, Forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity, sacredness are the characteristics of virtuous conduct. Those who are kind to all creatures, and who are never malignant, and who never speak ill of anybody, and who are always dear to the twice born ones, and who are familiar with the results of good or evil actions, are reckoned by the wise to be virtuous. Again, those who are just and virtuous, and well disposed towards all. And who are honest, and have obtained Heaven, who possess sacred characters, and constantly tread in this path of virtue, who are liberal in gifts, and unselfish, who show favour to the distressed. And who are revered by all, who possess the wealth of knowledge, who are devoted, and who are kind to all creatures, are virtuous according to the honest and wise. The persons who are charitable secure prosperity in this world, and abodes of happiness in the next. The virtuous man, if approached and solicited by the honest and wise, gives away alms to them with the best of his power, even at the denial of the comforts of his wife and dependents. Looking to their own interest, and having an eye upon virtue and the ways of the world. The man, who thus practise virtue obtain the greatest amount of virtue through eternal ages. Persons who possess the attributes of truthfulness, abstention from injuring others, modesty, and simplicity. And who are not malicious and proud, who are mild and self-sacrificing, who have self-control, and forbearance, intelligence and patience, who are kind towards all creatures. And who are free from desires and malice, are said to be the witnesses

\* The Mahabharata, Chapter LVII, page 80, Shanti Parva, verses 5—14 and 30—44

† The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CCVI, verses 62—67 pages 312—14

of the world. These three are reckoned to constitute the highest way of the pious, viz., a man must not offend anybody. He must be charitable. Also he must speak the truth always. These great men of highest virtue, who are kind on all occasions, and who are filled with compassion, obtain the greatest contentment and as well the super or path of virtue and whose acquisition of virtue is most certain. Harmlessness, forgiveness and peacefulness, contentment, agreeable speech, giving away possessions and excitements, the service of the virtuous, charitable actions performed in accordance with the dictates of the Sistris constitute the superior path of the honest and the wise. Those who constantly follow the path of virtue and daily worship the virtuous, can ascend the palace of knowledge. It is they only who are freed from that greatest terror (rebirth). O best of Brahmanas, it is they only who have the power of observing the several aspects of human nature."

'Markendeya said — O Brahmana I am always assiduous in eradicating this evil. The Destiny has already killed one (when he is killed by another),—the executioner is but an instrument. O foremost of Brahmanas we are but sub-agents in consequence of our Karma. O twice born one, those animals that are killed and the most of which are sold, also acquire karma, for the celestials, the gaeas and servants are entertained and Pitris are gratified with this dainty food. It is mentioned in the Sruti that herbs, vegetables, deer, birds and the wild animals are the ordained food for all creatures. O foremost of Brahmanas, the son of Ushinara, Sibi of great forbearance obtained Heaven, which is very difficult to obtain, by giving away his own flesh. O Brahmanas in the days of Yore two thousand animals used to be killed every day in the kitchen of the king Rantidora. And in the same manner two thousand kine were killed every day. Rantidora daily distributed food mixed with meat. O foremost of Brahmanas that king thus acquired unexcelled fame. For the four monthly festival animals must daily be killed. It is heard in Sruti thatgni is fond of animal food. O Brahmana, in sacrifices animals are always killed by the Brahmanas. O Brahmana, therethus sanctified by Mantras go to Heaven. If Agni were not so fond of animal food in the days of yore then it could never have become the food of anyone else. O foremost of Brahmanas, the following rule about meat-eating has been laid down by the Rishis. "Whoever eats animal food after duly offering it to the celestials and the Pitris does not commit any sin by eating it. It has been heard in the Sruti that such a man is considered to have taken no animal food, as a Brahmachari if he holds intercourse with his wife in her season, is still considered to be a (good) Brahmana."

"There are various ways in which evil Karma might be expiated,—such as, by making gifts, by speaking truth and by serving the preceptor. By worshipping the order of the twice born, by becoming devoted to virtue free from pride and idle talk. O foremost of Brahmanas, I do these things. Agriculture is considered to be a praiseworthy occupation, but it is well known that even in it great harm is done to animal life. In ploughing the ground, various creatures and animal lives are destroyed. O foremost of Brahmanas do you not think so? Vrihi and other so called seeds of rice are all living organisms,—what is your opinion on this matter? Men hunt wild animals and kill them to eat their meat, they also cut up trees and plants. O Brahmana, there are innumerable animal organisms in trees and fruits. And also in water,—do you not think so? O Brahmana, the whole universe is full of animals and animal organisms. Do you not see that fish preys upon fish and various other species of animals prey on various other animals, and there are also some who prey upon one another. O Brahmana,

a man kills innumerable animals that live in the ground by trampling them under his feet. Even wise and learned men kill many animals in various ways when sleeping or resting. What have you to say to this? The earth and the sky are all full of animal organisms, which are unconsciously killed by men from ignorance,—what have you to say to this? 'Do not kill', this commandment as ordained in the days of Yore was laid down by men who did not know the real facts. O foremost of men, who is there on earth who does not do harm to any creature? After full consideration,—this is the conclusion (that I have come to)—that there is none who has not killed an animal. O foremost of Brahmanas, even the Rishis whose vows are not to destroy animals, (do destroy animals). Only on account of their very great care, they commit less destruction (of animals). Men of noble birth and great accomplishment perpetrate wicked acts in defiance of all and they are not ashamed of it. Good men acting in an exemplary way are not praised by other good men, nor bad men acting in a contrary way are praised by other wicked men. Friends are not agreeable to friends, however accomplished they might be. Foolish polants men (ever) find fault with the virtue of their preceptors. Such reverses of the natural orders of things, O foremost of Brahmanas, are always seen in this world. What is your opinion as to the virtuousness or otherwise of this state of things?"\*

“The Fowler said —It is ordained by the old as found in the *Bruti* that the ways of virtue are subtle, diverse and infinite. In life being at risk and in marriage, it is proper to speak an untruth. Sometimes by untruth, truth is maintained and by truth untruth is maintained. Whatever conduces to the greatest good of all creatures is considered to be the truth. Virtue is thus perverted. Do you mark its subtle ways? Whoever with hearts full of gratitude and free from malice try to do what is good, obtain wealth, virtue, happiness and Heaven. Those who are freed from sin, those who are wise, forbearing, righteous and self-controlled enjoy continuous bliss in this world and in the next world†. Self-discipline can only be acquired by subduing the senses. It cannot be acquired by any other means. Heaven and hell both are dependent on our senses. When subdued, they lead us to Heaven and when indulged in, they lead us to hell. This subjugation of the senses is the highest means of attaining spiritual advancement, it is also at the root of all our spiritual degradation. By indulging in them, a person contracts vices and by bringing them under control, he attains salvation. The self-controlled man who acquires power over his six senses is never tainted with sin, and consequently evil has no power over him. Man's body has been compared with a chariot, his soul with a charioteer, and his senses with the horses. A skilful man drives about without confusion, like an able charioteer with well-broken horses. That man is an excellent driver who knows how to patiently wield the reins of these wild horses,—namely the six senses inherent in our nature. When our senses become ungovernable like horses on the road, we must patiently rein them in, for with patience we are sure to get the better of them. When man's mind is overpowered by any one of these senses running wild, he loses his reason and becomes like a ship tossed by the tempest in the sea. Men are deceived by illusion in hoping to reap the fruit of those six things the effects of which are studied by persons of spiritual insight who thereby reap the fruits of their clear perception"‡.

“He who is greatly under the influence of spiritual ignorance, who is foolish, senseless and given to (day) dreaming, who is idle, unenergetic, full of anger and

\*The Mahabharata, Chapter CCVII, Vana Parva, verses 3—15 and 21—33, pages 314-315

†The Mahabharata, Chapter CCVIII, Vana Parva, verses 2—4 and 42-43, pp 315 and 317

‡The Mahabharata, Chapter CCX, Vana Parva, verses 18—27 page 319

haughtiness\* is said to be under the influence of Tama. O Brahmana Rishi, that excellent man who is agreeable in speech thoughtful free from envy, industrious in action from an eager desire to reap its fruits and of warm temperament is said to be under the influence of Raja. He who is resolute, patient not subject to anger free from malice and is not skilful in action from want of a selfish desire to reap its fruits and who is wise and forbearing is said to be under the influence of Satva. When a man endued with Satva quality is influenced by worldliness he suffers misery but he hates worldliness when he realises its full significance. Then a feeling of indifference to worldly affairs begins to influence him. And then his pride decreases and uprightness becomes more prominent. His conflicting moral sentiments are reconciled and then self restraint in any matter (for him) becomes unnecessary. O Brahmana, a man may be born as a Sudra but if he is endued with good qualities he may attain to the state of a Vaishya. Similarly that of a Kshatriya, and if he is steadfast in rectitude he may even become a Brahmana. \*\*

The evolution of the ancient Hindu caste system is fully demonstrated in the foregoing quotation as against the theory of heredity in the Parusha Sukta of the Rig Veda, which is reflected in the story of Prithu being raised from the right thigh of king Vena, slain by the Brahmana through the instrumentality of Kusa or sacrifice (Chapter LIX, Shanti Parva, verses 94-95)

The duty of a child to its parents is described. The parents were then held to be ideal living gods and goddesses to the children and it was their first duty to serve them whole-heartedly with the family. Such a thing is still found in orthodox Hindu families where Western ideas have not entered.

"The Fowler said —O exalted one, these my father and mother are the idols I worship with whatever adoration due to the gods. Thirty three million gods with Indra at their head, are worshipped by all men so are these aged parents of mine worshipped by me. As the Brahmanas try to procure offerings for their gods so do I, with diligence for these two (my aged parents). O Brahmana these my father and mother are my supreme gods. O twice born one I always try to gratify them with the offering of fruits flowers and gems. To me they are like the three sa red fires mentioned by the learned. O Brahmana, they are to me as the sacrifices in the four Vedas. My five vital airs\* my wife, children, and friends are all for them. With my wife and my children, I always serve them. O foremost of Brahmanas, with my own hands I assist them in bathing, I also wash their feet, I give them food I speak to them only what is agreeable, avoiding all, that is unpleasant and disagreeable. I even do that which is not virtuous, to please them. O foremost of the twice borns O Brahmana, I am always diligent in always waiting upon them. The parents, the sa red fire, the soul, the preceptor,—these five, O foremost of Brahmanas deserve the highest worship from a person who seeks prosperity. By properly serving them, one acquires the merit of perpetually keeping up the sacred fires. It is the eternal and invariable duty of all who lead domestic life †

\* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXI, Vana Parva, verses 5—12, pages 318-320

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXIII, Vana, Parva, page 322 verses 18—28

The use of *riya* is fully explained to the Brahman saying, when the three sages were conversing together, that it was not like the case of a crane flying over a crane or a crane flying over a well-known tradition. It is a proverb very commonly used in every day conversation. It is, however, the first time it is found in the mouth of the Jains. The *riya* is a Sanskrit word. The *Brhadatta* speaks in high terms of the *Riya*. *Riya* is retired to the Himalayas, and one of the *Upanishads* called *Riya* and the word, when it is affixed after a word, denotes a superlative degree of it, such as *Debarshiya*, *Parasharshya*, etc. *Riya* is father of *Nobhi* and mother of *Maru*. *Dabhi* is called the first of the *riya* when *Riya* was installed on the throne of *riya*. The *Mahabharata* says that he met the great *Narayana*. *Narayana* is said to have given important data regarding the *Nara-Narayana* episode of the *Mahabharata*, where the founder of the Jain religion is mentioned. The *Nara-Narayana* edition seems to be a later edition of the *Mahabharata*, for in it the idea of transmigration of the soul comes into prominence with the Yoga system of philosophy. *Yogi* *Yogi* initiated it.

There are eighteen Puranas of the Hindus and the Puranas or sections of the *Mahabharata* are the same in number. One can hardly overlook certain historical facts. The Puranas are not as old as the *Epics*. Not one of them is larger than the *Mahabharata*. Many of the stories of the great *Epics* were described in the Puranas. The *Bhagavata Purana* occupies pride of place among the eighteen Puranas. As a piece of literature its place is also the highest among the sacred Hindu books. It not only bears the stamp of a unified composition but its style, metre, diction and language are very learned and difficult. It is of a later age than *Ayasa*' time and some hold it to be the production of the well-known grammarian *Bopadeha*. It seems probable that it is a later work, what *Ayasa* composed. No Purana shows such close relation to the Indian *Epics*, especially the *Mahabharata*, as the *Bhagavata*. Indeed, it is mentioned in the preamble of the latter and seems to be very true. *Kapila* is mentioned as the incarnation of *Narayana* in the *Epics*. This also is mentioned in the *Bhagavata*, Book III, at the end. The *Sakuntala* episode and the love metaphysics of *Krishna* are the life and soul of the *Bhagavata*. The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* tried to depict this in the numerous characters of *Sita*, *Damayanti*, *Alalya*, *Tara*, *Draupadi*—but all these were thrown into the background by the marvellous description of *Rashila*. *Krishna* was not present there in person but in the part of the love-to-tugle of *Brindaban*. In the *Mahabharata* this was tried at the dice play, where even a wise and learned husband and king like *Yudhis-*

thira could think of staking his consort, marriage with whom won him prosperity—paternal properties were recovered, villains' crimes were publicly exposed and monarchy over kings was established in the Raj-suya

There is the difference between earthly and Heavenly love in the Mahabharata, but the cowherd girls were lost in the pure love excited in youth by the company of an innocent playmate who rose to eminence as a hero and god and left them to reign in Dwarka with sixteen thousand queens. This number is a favourite one with the ancient sages who were authors of the sacred books, for that was the number of the sons of King Sagar who were destroyed by the curse of Kapila and released by the water of the divine Ganges. What the Old Testament is to the New Testament of the Christians, the Mahabharata and the Mahabharata are to the Hindus. The current Mahabharata contains incongruous matter due to the fall of Hinduism when Buddhism flourished, for Buddhist monarchs ruled India so as to propagate that religion all over the world. Buddhists believed in the Yoga system of philosophy and their aim and ambition led to Nirvana. The Puranas admit Rudra was one of the ten incarnations of God. This is an instance of ancient Hindu religious toleration. Of all the Puranas Vishnu, contrary to tradition, ascribes its authorship to Parasara. A collection of all the passages common to the Mahabharata and the Vishnu Purana is given by A. Holtzman, Mahabharata IV, 36 ff. The learned Hopkins says —

'First, the Epic, synthetically considered post dates the latest Vedic works. Second, the final redactors were priests, well acquainted with Vedic literature. Of these points there can be no doubt nor is a third open to serious objection, namely, that the restriction of philosophical citation to philosophical chapters does not prove anything in regard to the date of the Epic that precluded the insertion of these chapters. Whether the Puranas ascribed to Romaharsa (sic) in XII 319, 21, precede or follow Epic literature, is not a question that can be answered categorically. Nothing is commoner than the statement made by some Epic character that a story was heard by him long ago in a Purana. But most of the extant Puranas are in their present shape certainly later than the Epic. Nevertheless, before the great Epic was completed the eighteen Puranas were known, since they are mentioned as a group XVII, 5, 44, (not in C) and G, 97. Further, a Vayu Purana is referred to in III, 191, 16

etat te sarvam Akhyatam atitanagatam tatha  
Vayuproktam anusmrtya Puranam rasisamstutam

"This statement, however, implying that the Purana treats of future events, though illustrated in this instance by the Epic's account of later ages, scarcely tallies with the early Epic use of the word, which regularly connotes *atita*, the past, but not *anagata*, (account of) things to be, yet it corresponds exactly to the ordinary contents of the later Puranas."

"As the ('handogya Upanishad applies the title 'Fifth Veda' to the Itihasa Purana, so the Epic claims the same title it is true that it is also called a Dharma-

castra, yet this represents but one side of its encyclopedic nature, as it is besides Arthacastra, Dharmacastra, and Kamacastra, 1, 2, 383. When the character of the work as a whole is described, it is in terms of Epic story, not of didactic code. Even the Harivansa poet does not fail to distinguish the two elements. He boasts that the Epic is an akhyanam bahvartham crutavistram but still says that it is the Bharata Katha, Bharata story, the root of which is the dramatic episode of the Rjasuya, which led to the development of the story (II 3, 2, 13 ff). So another poet proclaims: —'I will relate the great good fortune of that great hearted king the Bharata, whose brilliant Itihasa, story, is called the Mahabharata', 1, 99, 49. The reason that Krishna Dvaipayana spent three years in making the Epic was not only that he wished to do a good thing but that he wished to extend the glory of the Pandus and other warriors (1 62, 17-18). Constituting a small but important part of the various tales told in the Epic are found genealogical verses, anurana-slokas (or gathas), which commemorate the history of the race of valiant kings and great seers of the past \*\*

Vishnu Purana is a dialogue between Parasara and Maitreya, both of whom figure in the Mahabharata as important personages connected with its plot and history. Parasara replies in the terms of what he had heard from his grandfather before, and the philosophical views are seen to be according to the Samkhya system. It is a grandfather's tale as it were, and Bhishma's discourse in the Mahabharata is surely of that nature. In the opening stanzas (Book I, 16 49, 55, 61, 72) of the Mahabharata it is said to be a Samhita, collection of Purana, Itihasa, Kavya, Castra, narrations and Upanishads. The Harivansa and the Ramayana speak of theatrical exhibitions. Narada is the representative of Bharata as the genius of music and is well-known as a singer of praise to God to the accompaniment of stringed instruments.

"When the lyre is mentioned it is to wake up sleepers by means of 'sweet songs and the sound of the lyre', gita, vinacabdi, 1 218, 14. Only Narada, a superhuman or heterypical bard, comes skilled in dance and song with his melodious mind soothing tortoise lyre, 15, 54, 19. There is then in the Epic, though a musical accompaniment is unknown, a distinct recollection of the practice of reciting lays, gitani, the sole object of which was to 'praise the Knurra e,' as opposed to reading or reciting conversationally stories of ancient times. To neither of these elements can a judicious historian ascribe priority. The story and the lay are equally old. Their union was rendered possible as soon as the lay, formerly sung, was dissociated from music and repeated as a heroic tale of antiquity. This union was the foundation of the present Epic.' †

"But though it is a gross exaggeration of the facts, as well as a misapprehension of poetic values, to make the Epic a poem that was from the start a moral and religious narrative, yet, in as much as in the hands of the priest the latter element was made predominant, there is no objection to the statement that from the point of view of the Epic as a whole the Mahabharata is to-day less tale than teaching. That this double character was recognized by those who contributed the introduction to the poem itself is indisputable. The 'tales' are

\* Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 53

† Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 367



counted as separate. The original Bharata was only a quarter of its present size. Then, as later, the different elements were still distinguished and the poem was not regarded as wholly a Smṛiti or instruction book but as an artistic poem, *kāvya*, per se. So the pseudo-epic saunt at its own literary finish *evade ca rtho ca hetau ca eva prathamāsargaja (śarāsvatī), XII 363*. \*

In the Epic the repeaters of the genealogical verses are not different from the Sutas, but there is the group *phṛas* of Sutamaghada-bandināḥ. It is the Vutlikas who recite genealogical verses, Sutas recite Purāṇa, and Magaḥ Pa and Bāḥlināḥ sing the glory of kings. The Mahābhārata recited by Suta cannot but be a Purāṇa, what Vaisampayana described as a narration, Narada, Śaṇḍita, Vyasa and Vaisampayana, Śaṇḍita, Upanishad, Sanjaya, Kabala, Yajñavalkya, philosophy of Yoga, and the current Mahābhārata, a drama, was the product of rhapsodists and story-tellers who tried to hold their audiences enthralled with new tales built up around the main story to create new interest every day—thoroughly heroic, religious, satirical and comical, as fitting entertainment for different men and the stranger alike.

In Banī's Kadāmbarī, edited by Paterson† it is stated that the heroine Kadāmbarī is listening to a recitation of the Mahābhārata from Narada's daughter in a single, gentle singing strain, and that a pair of kinsaras are playing the flute as in a compliment. This is the play of the dramatic Epic. Naturally different creeds and cults found entrance with its vast scope, and sections were divided to suit different occasions. The people were called upon to bear the cost of recitation when the Hindu kingdom disappeared in the progress of time and they were not in a position to undertake the recitation of the whole Mahābhārata. The result was different Purāṇas grew out of the Epics with Vyasa as their author. With the growing enlightenment and knowledge of the age the spurious Purāṇas were found out not to be the true account of the Epic, then the eighteen Purāṇas were replaced with the eighteen sections of the Mahābhārata. It was then said that what could not be found in it would not be met with elsewhere. It was done at the time of the Hindu revival after the fall of the Buddhists in India. The Buddhists did not spare the heroes and heroines, investing them with all sorts of calumnies.

No language of India is so closely allied to Sanskrit as Bengali, and the Gaudīya recension of the Epics has been found to be the best. Bengal first published the Epics and their translations at tremendous cost. This to a great extent proves the cause of the interest in the origin of the books in Bengal. The discovery of the very old plaques in the ruins of Saptagrama, depicting scenes of the Epic Mahābhārata,

\* Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India" page 363.

† Dr. Winternitz's "History of Indian Literature," page 463.

supports the claim of Bengal. The people of the North-Western Provinces and Bengal are famous worshippers of Rama and Krishna. The laws of Yajñavalkya are followed by the people of the North-Western Provinces, whereas in Bengal Jimutavahana's laws of inheritance are adopted. The learned Monier Williams' views about them will be interesting :—

"Jimutavahana, by some thought to have been a prince of the house of Silara who either composed this work himself or caused it to be compiled rather earlier than the beginning of the sixteenth century. It should be stated that both the Mitakshara and Daya-bhaga are developments of, rather than commentaries on, Manu and Yajñavalkya \*. In the Maithila School or that of Mithila (North Behar and Tirhut), besides the Code of Yajñavalkya with the Mitakshara, the Virada chintamani and Vyavahara chintamani of Vacaspati Misra are much studied, also the Virada-ratnakara of Chandeshvara (who lived about 1314) and the Virada-chandra, composed by a learned female named Lakhma-devi, who is said to have set the name of her kinsman, Misaru-misra, to her own works. In the Dravidian or South-Indian School, besides the Mitakshara, as before, there is the Smṛiti-chandrika and Dattaka chandrika of Devanabhatta. Madharacharya's commentary on Parasara's Code (called Parasara-smṛiti rakhya), and Nanda-pandita's commentary on Vishnu's Code (called Vajrayanti), and on Parasara's Code, and his treatise on the law of adoption called Dattaka-chandrika. In the Western School (of Bombay and Maharashtra), besides the Mitakshara, certain treatises by Nilakantha-bhatta, particularly one called Vyavahara mayukha, have the most weight"†

There are as many as nineteen law-givers in Ancient India, but Manu stands pre-eminent amongst them, and second to him in importance may be said to be Yajñavalkya. The speaker in Manu Samhita is Manu himself as far as I, 60 verse, and thereafter Bhrigu. It is clearly said at the end that it was enunciated by Bhrigu. The great commentator of Manu is a Bengali Varendra Brahman Kullukabhatta, who lived in Benares. He explains Itihasa or history by the Mahabharata. Svayambhuba Manu learnt the laws from Brahma and taught them to Marichi and nine other sages. Bhrigu was deputed by him to declare his code to the world. The book is divided into twelve sections and not eighteen, like the Mahabharata. There are many verses common in Manu Samhita and the great Epic. It is a metrical version of ancient traditions (Smṛiti) like the great Epic. It is post-Vedic literature. The learned Monier Williams says —

"An original collection is alluded to by commentators under the titles Vriddha and Vrihat, which is said to have contained 100,000 couplets, arranged under twenty-four heads in one thousand chapters, whereas the existing Code contains only 2,685 verses. Possibly abbreviated versions of old collections were made at successive periods, and additional matter inserted, the present text merely representing the latest compilation. At any rate we must guard against a supposition that the expression 'Code' often applied to this collection, is intended to denote a systematic arrangement of precepts which existed as actual laws in force

\* Dr Monier Williams' "Indian Wisdom," page 305

† Dr. Monier Williams, "Indian Wisdom" pages 307-308

throughout one country. It is probable that the whole of India was never under one Government. Some few powerful monarchs are known to have acquired sovereignty over very extensive territories and were then called Chakravartins, but we must beware of imagining that Manu's law book is a record of national ordinances and institutions prevalent over the whole of such territories. No doubt ultimately it worked its way to acceptance with the entire Hindu community; and certainly in the end it not only secured for itself a high place in popular estimation and a degree of reverence only second to that accorded to the Veda, but it became moreover, the chief authority as a basis of Hindu Jurisprudence. Originally, however, its position must have been different. It merely represented certain rules and precepts (perhaps by different authors current among a particular tribe, or rather school of Brahmans called Manavas, who probably lived in the North Western region between the river Sarasvati and Drishadvati (see p 216), not far from Delhi and the scene of the great social conflict described in the Mahabharata. This tribe seems to have belonged to the Taittiriyaikas 'adherents of the Black Yajur Veda' and their Mantras, Brahmana, and Sruta Sutras are still extant, but their Grihya and Smarachaika Sutras appear to have perished. In all probability, too, many of the rules, as we have them presented to us, were simply theoretical,—inserted to complete an ideal of what ought to constitute a perfect system of religious ceremonial, moral, political, and social duties. Who the real compiler and promulgator of the Institutes was, is not known'.

Manu's eight forms of marriage are all specified in the Epic as well as in the Grihya Sutras. The filial piety of the ancient Hindus is notably manifested in the performance of offering oblations to the dead with religious ceremonies and gifts. The reading of the Epics was enjoined. The offering to the father is said to be the essential point on the question of the law of inheritance. In fact, it was treated as the principle evidence of kinship, on which the title to the patrimony was founded. The very name Putra (son) is ascribed to have originated from the performance of the rite which rescues the parent from hell (Put) (Manu, IX, 138).

Marriage in ancient India was regarded as a religious duty and a purificatory rite, and it is held to be one of the most important initiations like Upanayan. The birth of children initiates man and woman into the true idea of unselfish love, devotion and sacrifice. They are the keys to open the gates of Heaven and the ancient Hindus justly regarded that a son saved the parent from hell. The most important subject connected with property is the law of inheritance (daya) treated of in the IX book in Manu. The famous Jimutbahan was said to be the author of a book called Dayabhaga, i.e., laws of inheritance and partition which is particularly applicable to Bengalees only, and Mitakshara of Vijnanesvara is acknowledged in the rest of India. The fight between Bibhabasu and Supratika, the two brothers, over the division of the paternal estate raises the question of ancient Hindu law in the Astika Parva, Chapter XXIX, about partition. The old law and

custom are not adhered to by the younger brother Supratika. This important fact gives a clue to the place where the incident in question took place. Only the Bengal School took exception to the ancient law of inheritance and partition. Manu IX says.—

'The eldest brother may take the paternal property, entirely into his own hands and the rest may live under his control exactly as they used to live in their father's time' (105 verse)

The object of this is explained by the elder brother Bibhabasu as follows —

'Kashyapa said —That great Rishi was not willing to keep his wealth joint with his brother Supratika always spoke of a partition. Some time after Vivarasu told his brother Supratika 'It is from foolishness, blinded by wealth, that many wish to divide (paternal) wealth. But as soon as it is partitioned, they begin to quarrel from the blindness arising from wealth. And enemies in the guise of friends, cause estrangement between ignorant and selfish brothers. They confirm their quarrels by pointing out faults, and thus they fall one by one. Absolute ruin very soon overtakes those (brothers) that are separated. Therefore, good men never approve of the partition amongst brothers, who, when divided, do not have any regard for Sastras or Gurus. As you, without regarding my advice, impelled by the desire of separation, wish to partition the wealth, for this, O Supratika, you will become an elephant.' Thus being cursed Supratika told Vivarasu. 'You will become an aquatic tortoise.' Thus being cursed by each other Supratika and Vivarasu, both fools, now live as a tortoise and an elephant. Owing to their wrathful nature they have both become inferior animals'.

King Bali's sons were the kings of the five provinces Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Suhma and Pundra. It seems that during their time the ancient rule of partition was over-ruled.† The Ramayana, VII, Canto CXXI, also bears out the divisions amongst the sons of Rama, and Satrugna. Kusabati, Srabasti, Mathura and Baidesha were the kingdoms of the two sons Kusa and Lova of Rama, and Subahu and Baidesha of Satrugna. At the end of the Ramayana it is said that, after the disappearance of Rama, the kingdom of Ayodhya was lost for years. It was not revived until the days of king Rishava. The Ramayana proves the ancient law, the four sons of Dasaratha were upholders of it in their life-time only. Bharata did not ascend the throne during the exile of Rama though he could have done so by virtue of the boon his mother got from his father. This decides the difference of the age of the Astika Parva of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Astika Parva is Yajnavalkya's addition after the Satapatha Brahmana.

The annotator Nilkantha, in the explanatory note of Chapter 217, Shanti Parva, which deals with the aim of Narayana sage from whom

\*The Mahabharata, Chapter XXIX, pages 47-48, Adi Parva, ...

†(See) Adi Parva, Chapter CIV, verses 48-50

Mahabharata emanated, says that Yajnavalkya was the great Yoga expounder of religion, where, by Yoga, one can conceive the nature of the soul in man.

"Bhisma said —He does not know Brahma who does not know the four topics, namely, dreams, dreamless sleep, imminent and transcendent Brahma, as also what is Manifest (*viz.*, the body), and what is Unmanifest (the intelligent soul), which the great Rishi (Narayana) has described as Tattvam (pure principle) That which is manifest is subject to death. That which is unmanifest transcends death. The Rishi Narayana has described the religion of inclination. Upon that depends the entire universe with its mobile and immobile creatures. The religion of disinclination again leads to the unmanifest and eternal Brahma. The Creator (Brahman) has described the religion of inclination. Inclination indicates re-birth or return. Disinclination, on the other hand indicates the highest end. The whole universe, fettered by desire, is revolving like a wheel. As the fibres of a lotus stalk overspread themselves into every part of the stalk likewise the fibres of desire, which are without beginning or end, spread themselves over every part of the body. As a weaver drives his threads into a cloth by means of his shuttle, similarly the threads that constitute the fabric of the universe are woven by the shuttle of Desire. He who understands the changes of Nature, Nature her-self and Purusha, becomes free from Desire and acquires Liberation. The divine sage Narayana, that refuge of the universe, for the sake of mercy towards all creatures, distinctly laid down these means for the acquisition of immortality."

The great Epic Mahabharata, by examples, tried to solve this great question—how to replace the actual by the ideal. Yoga says self-sacrifice, but there was another path which the school of knowledge and personal influence preached. Kapila stood against the priesthood and sacrificial institutions. He was above self-interest—this was the ideal which got supremacy over the actual. The blood of the martyr is the seed of the temple of God. Dadhichi, Sakti, etc., laid down their lives for the ideal and king Janmejaya and others did likewise, as the great Epic points out, to declare to the world that they were men not so much concerned with their own pleasures and vindication of their prestige and power as with those of their society, whose ideals they were. They had to act on the principle that their prized personal influences could replace the actual by the ideal.

This should not be lost sight of, that there is always the distinction between absolute fidelity to the ideal and a compromise with the actual. In the realm of ethics a compromise between the true and false is high treason. The cause of religious and social reform in Ancient India demanded whole-hearted consecration to the cause, in direct opposition to the limited area which orthodoxy then prescribed. Persecution must necessarily await him who steps outside the realm of orthodoxy. It was for this that the great author of the Mahabharata put forward ideal

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\* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXVII, verses 1—4, page 321 and verses 34—38, page 323



cannot be worked out with the precision of mathematical rules or calculations. It will be leading the human race to moral suicide, if all men and women are to be judged by one standard or law. There is a social dilemma which arises from the balancing and scheduling of public virtue on the basis of mathematical calculations on the question of marriage. Are there not people ready to accept happiness and virtue at the hands of legislatures and critics?

In society, as in legislation, everything battles with so many 'ifs' and 'buts' that there can be no abstract solution, they create only abject prejudices. Love is the poetry of the senses. It rules the destiny of man and woman and can make him or her great by culture of mind. Love is a union of desire and tenderness, and marriage is a science. Happiness in marriage does not come from the observance of the sacred rites and the blessings of the priests, but by direct, perfect understanding between two souls. The union is a divine gift of thought after having enjoyed the happiness of being loved reciprocally. The genius of a husband and a wife lies in handling directly the various shades of pleasure and developing them in such a manner as will realise the soul force in the heart of love. Talent in love consists in combining the power of imagination with that of execution. Lasting love is what keeps the forces of two beings in equilibrium. The duration of the attachment of the two souls increases in proportion to their resistance to obstacles which society chances to put in the way of their happiness.

It has given rise to romances. The ancient poets knew well how to put a mythological touch to ancient tradition on the marriage problem of their day so as to play upon the imagination of the people. Such was the case with Draupadi's marriage. A woman then has no justification for reproaching her husband, on the score of the legal compact in virtue of which she belongs to him, who stakes her at dice play or declares to the world that she is the wife of the five brothers on the political grounds of averting a dreadful war and regaining a lost kingdom and prosperity by a marriage alliance.

The Hindu Epic is the meeting place of the six systems of Hindu philosophy and an attempt has been made to interpret its mystery in the same way. The Ramayana treats of Yoga philosophy, whereas the Mahabharata was originally the meeting place of Samkhya and Vedanta till it became that of all six systems.

Vyasa was the author of Vedanta and his disciples sought to prove the first principles of Vedanta Sutra, the union of Purusha (man) with Prakriti (woman), in Draupadi's marriage. Krishna was the Supreme Purusha Narayana. In Vedanta philosophy the union of action with

self-knowledge of the soul is found. Some hold that the five breaths of life were represented in the five Pandavas. All these esoteric explanations may be right in their way, but the aim and object of the Epic, as shown in it, are not these. The three steps of Baman, one of the incarnations of God in the sacrifice of Bali, with which the glory of God is sung, are explained in the Epic as follows —

“Achievements, Prosperity, Intelligence, and the Path that leads to the celestial region, are all there where this Ono, viz., the illustrious Vishnu of three steps, is. He is the thirty-three gods headed by Indra. There is no doubt in this. He is the one Ancient God. He is the foremost of all gods. He is the refuge of all creatures. He is without beginning and without destruction. He is unmanifest. He is the great Destroyer of Madhu. Gifted with mighty energy, He has taken birth (among men) for doing the purposes of the gods. This Madhava is the expounder of the most difficult truths about Profit, Wealth and He is also their achiever. O son of Pritha, the victory you have got over your enemies, your peerless achievements, the dominion you have acquired over the whole Earth, are all owing to having Narayana espouse your cause. The fact of your having got the inconceivable Narayana for your protector and refuge enabled you to become an Adharyu (chief sacrificer) for pouring multitudes of kings as libations on the burning fire of battle. This Krishna was your great sacrificial ladle, resembling the all-destroying fire which appears at the end of the cycle. Duryodhana, with his sons, brothers and kinsmen, was much to be pitied inasmuch as, moved by anger he made war with Hari and the wielder of Gandiva. Many sons of Diti, many foremost of Danavas of huge bodies and vast strength, have died in the fire of Krishna's discus like insects in a forest fire. How incapable then must human beings be of fighting against that Krishna — human beings who, O foremost of men, are shorn of strength and power. As regards Java, he is a powerful Yogi resembling the all-destroying cycle-fire in energy. Capable of drawing the bow equally with both hands, he is always in the van of the fight. With his energy, O king, he has killed all the soldiers of Duryodhana. Listen to me as I tell you what Mahadeva, having the bovine bull for the emblem on his standard, had recited to the ascetics on the breast of Himavat. His utterances form a Purana. Having heard the words of Vyasa, as also of the highly intelligent Narada, I have described to you the adorableness of Krishna. I have myself added, from my own knowledge something to that account. Indeed, through the fault of Duryodhana, of Karni, of Shakuni, and of Dushshasana as the fourth that the Kurus have died.”

Royal and priestly families inter-married. Vyasa's grand-daughter by Suka was married to Anuha's king and Brahmadata's mother. It is evident that Vyasa had relationship with the Panchal's king and might have interested himself in Draupadi's marriage to restore the Pandavas to their paternal estate. This is to some extent a historical fact which the Mahabharata mentions. The name Anga, the son of Prajapati Manu from which perhaps Anga kingdom derives its name, gives an indication that the first seat of Aryan civilisation was on the Gangetic plain. From kings Gaya, Ayus and Mithi, the kingdoms of Gaya, Ayodhya and Mithila sprang up. Likewise, from the names of the kings Utkal, Kuru and Hasti, the places were known after them.



Ayodhya-Videha, Pratisthan, Vaisali, Anga and Banga played important parts in the political and religious development of India. Ilabarta is the name of the kingdom of Ila. This Ilabarta is identified with Kamaksha, where tradition says that the male becomes female and Ila was said to have been converted into a female.

The Mahabharata stands forth before the world, not only as an embodiment of ancient Hindu philosophical thought and wisdom, but also as a record of the intellectual activities of the royal families and their priests as well as of the great performers like Kapila. Kapila's discourse is a delectable diversion on knowledge. The Epic is full of philosophical episodes of the great Videha king. The Ramayana has none of these things, and there lies the superiority of the Mahabharata. Public recitals and expositions of the Indian Epics were the true causes of their revision to make them adaptable to the tastes of the audience, and this was responsible for the great changes in the plots and history behind them. The principal characters have thus become the property of the Indian household. They afforded ample material for great poets like Bhasa, Magha, Bharavi and Bhababhuti to give their imaginations full play, and they were admired for the results. Their imaginations, more or less, were responsible for the revisions of the great Epics.

Of all the provinces of India, Bengal took the lead with reference to the publication of the Epics. The work was first undertaken by a Committee of Public Instruction, was completed by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1839, and is still considered to be the authoritative edition of the great Epic. An attempt is being made to correlate the different provincial texts in order to arrive at the original texts, if possible and practicable, by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Society, but it is very regrettable that that society should not first have taken up a study of the contents to find out the true historical facts with the plots and characters of the Epics before they took up the question of texts. European scholars have been at great pains to prove that there were Christian ideas behind the Epics. It has been definitely found that the different sections of the Mahabharata were of later origin and did not belong to one definite period. The learned Hopkins took great trouble to make an analytical survey by means of the different literary compositions and philosophical ideas in his well-known work, and found the Epic physiology common to both the Indian Epics. There is one significant fact in the revised Epics, which must have taken place at one time during the Hindu revival, that the end justifies the means. It is clearly mentioned that diversion from truth at the marriage ceremony is allowable.

"Sarmishtha said —It is not sinful to speak falsehood in the following five cases, namely, in joke, in respect of women to be associated with, in marriage, in prospect

of immediate death, and at the time of the loss of one's whole fortune O King, it is not true that he is fallen who does not speak out the truth when asked (for there are occasions when to speak falsehood is an act of piety) The falsehood is sinful when one (harmful) object is to be accomplished \*\*

It was at such an age that the great Indian Epics were revised It was for this the unlawful things were introduced as lawful, making the genuineness of characters doubted and transforming them into more or less allegorical poems Nor is this all Many theories were advanced regarding the successive and slowly accumulating additions and alterations of the Indian Epics. The Mahabharata, as it is, is more an ancient institute of law or a Dharma Shashtra than a record of events or history. Some say it is intended to inculcate philosophical tenets through characters or by an allegorical struggle between the Sun and Darkness, and that the original poems were altered to suit the changed condition of things and affairs Some say it sang the glory of the victorious or defeated kings in the war of the Kuru-Panchalas, or the Kuru and Pandavas or, finally, the general body of Bharata kings It was not a question whether the Mahabharata was originally a pro-Kauravite or pro-Pandavite poem, or whether hero Karna or king Asoka was reflected in the triumph of Vaishnavite over the Saivite elements or the struggle between Brahmans and Jainas, Buddhas or the Pauranics full of mythologies

The fact is that the current Mahabharata discloses fragments of all kinds of literature, justifying the many theories hitherto sought to be established by learned European and Indian scholars. Flee's Gupta Inscription, page 137, line 19, mentions an inscription of the Satasahaeri Samhita by Parasarasuta Vedavyasa Vyasa The date of the inscription seems to have been somewhere near the sixth century A D This cannot be ignored International hatred or the persecution of the followers of different cults have not been found in the Mahabharata save in the case of Charvaka Rishava is one of the early Tirthankars of the Jains and an account of him is given Devpal seems to have been his follower. Kapila's discourse is given as well as those of his disciples Pancasikha and Sulabha Yudhisthira accuses himself of being befooled and Durjodhana has no fault in the Mahabharata There are the versions which speak in favour of the Kauravas, whereas there is also great praise for the Pandavas when they retire to the forest after the dice play Buhler gives proof in his book, 'Contributions to the History of Mahabharata' that the Mahabharata in its present form is nothing but a Smriti and existed in the fourth century A D The Bible or Buddhistic sacred books do not command such an influence on the general body of followers as do the Indian Epics on Hindus

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\*The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LXXXII, verses 16-17

The Epic world is interested in the Indian Epics, and European scholars like Max Muller, Larsen, Weber, Levi, Goldstucker, Wilson, Colebrooke, Monier Williams, etc., have evinced great interest in and written about the Indian Epics, and their work is maintained by other well-known scholars too numerous to notice. But it must be said that their angle of vision cannot be the same as that of the Indians, although they have solved many things very difficult and abstruse for which every credit is due to them, for to evolve order out of the glaring chaotic mass is a most difficult task.

The bards of the different royal families of India were all men of education and poetic genius. They knew how to enliven the glory of the fallen heroes who were killed in the great battle of Kurukshetra so that their descendants might follow in the footsteps of their illustrious ancestors. The current Mahabharata thus became bard poetry of a later age. But fortunately the old discourses were not lost. The different stages of development can be traced from them. It is evident that the great Epic has lost its original character as a faithful history of the different times. This has got to be ascertained from the instructive discourses to heroes and heroines of the plots. The chivalry of the age made the book, originally Vedic and a moral instruction manual, into an exaggerated war history. The bereaved royal families were thus consoled and the table of contents mentions it with regard to Dhritarastra by Sanjaya. There are the actual discourses between Sanjaya and Dhritarastra, and Gita is one of them. The great generals of the war Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Salva were each given one big section to describe their exploits and glories. Vyasa had no hand in them, they were the creation of the Kuru Court bards, like Sanjaya, with those of their great allies. Reading these accounts one can easily be prejudiced, in the manner the European scholars have been, led into believing that the great Epic is pro-Kauravite. But Vyasa's book, as recited in the University of Saunaka, is as follows —

"Sauti said —The Brahmanas spoke of many things, founded on the Vedas, in the intervals of their duties, but Vyasa recited the wonderful and great history, called the Bharata. Saunaka said —I desire to hear that sacred history called Mahabharata, that spreader of the fame of the Pandavas, which Krishna Dwaipayana, asked by Janamejaya, caused to be duly recited in the intervals of the sacrifice."

The Mahabharata is a medley of two sections, Pro-Kauravite and Pro-Pandavite. Vyasa was the author of the latter and Sanjaya and others of the former. Besides the original Bharata Samhita, there are Yajnavalkya's additions and alterations and dramatic transformations by the bard poetry of a later age. Bhishma is a reciter of the Maha-

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\* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LIX, page 78, verses 5-7

bharata to Yudhishthira. He defines the nine cardinal duties to be observed by all men

"The control of anger, truthfulness of speech, justice, forgiveness, begetting children upon one's own married wives, purity of conduct, avoidance of quarrel, simplicity, and maintenance of dependents,—these are the nine duties which all the four castes should follow."

It is evident that at the time Bhishma recited and Yudhishthira lived, the caste system was materialised. He mentioned that Brahma composed a work on the subject of religion, profit and pleasure of a hundred thousand verses, which was abridged in the following manner :

"In view however of the gradual decrease of the span of human existence, the divine Shiva abridged that highly important science compiled by Brahma. The abridgement, called *Valchikaksha*, consisting of ten thousand chapters, was then received by Indra, devoted to Brahma and possessed of great ascetic merit. The divine Indra again abridged it into a work containing five thousand chapters and named it *Abhidhanaka*. Afterwards the powerful *Brihaspati*, by his intelligence further abridged the work, into one containing three thousand chapters and named it *Arshasparsha*. Next, that famous teacher of Yoga, Kavi of unlimited wisdom abridged it further into a work of a thousand chapters. Considering the period of human existence and the general decrease (of everything), great Pishu did thus for the well-being of the world, abridge that science. Then, approaching that lord of creatures, viz., Vishnu, the God said to him,—'point out O God, that one among men who deserves to reign supreme over the rest.' The divine and powerful Narayana, thinking a little, created by his will a son born of his energy, named *Virajas*. The highly blessed *Virajas*, however did not desire to rule on Earth. His mind, O son of Pandu was bent for a life of renunciation. *Virajas* had a son named *Krittimat*. He to cast off pleasure and enjoyment. *Krittimat* had a son named *Kardama*. *Kardama* also practised severe austerities. The lord of creatures *Kardama*, begot a son named *Ananga*, who became a protector of creatures, pious and well read in the science of punishment. *Ananga* begot a son named *Ativala* well read in politics. Obtaining extensive empire after the death of his father, he became a slave of his passions. *Mrtyu*, O King had a mind begotten daughter named *Sunita*, well known over the three worlds. She was married to *Ativala* and gave birth to a son named *Vena*. *Vena* a slave of anger and malice, became unpious and tyrannical towards all creatures. The Brahmanandin *Blasht* filled him with kusa blades inspired with Mantras."

Here is the genealogy of the Vena line of ancient kings, from the name of whose son *Prithu* the name *Prithubi* (earth) originated. This chapter gives the history of the birth of the goddess *Sri* (Lakshmi) and highly intelligent *Dharma*, which are represented in *Draupadi* and *Yudhishthira*. Their issue was *Artha*.

"At that time a golden lotus sprang from Vishnu's brow. The Goddess *Sri* was born of that lotus. She became the consort of the highly intelligent *Dharma*. Upon *Sri*, O son of Pandu, *Dharma* begot *Artha*. All the three, viz., *Dharma* and *Artha* and *Sri*, were established in a king. A person, upon the wane of his merit, descends from Heaven to Earth, and is born as a king well read in the

\* *Shanti Parva*, Chapter LX, page 88, verse 7

† The *Mahabharata*, Chapter LIX, *Shanti Parva*, verses 81—94

science of punishment. Such a person becomes great and is really a portion of Vishnu on Earth. He becomes highly intelligent and obtains superiority over others."

The work of Brahma referred to herein consisted of the following subjects —

"Thus O Yudhishtira the histories of the past, the origin of the great Rishis, the holy rivers, the planets and stars and asterisms, the duties of the four modes of life, the four kinds of Homa, the characteristics of the four castes and the four branches of learning were all described in that work (of Brahma). Whatever objects or things O son of Pandu there are on Earth, were all described in that work. Of the Grandfather Histories, the Vedas and the Nyaya (logic) were all described in it as also penances, knowledge, abstinence from injury to all creatures, truth, falsehood, and high morality. Adoration of aged persons, gifts, purity of conduct, readiness for work and mercy towards all creatures, were very fully treated in it."†

Bhisma recited a verse sung by Narayana on the duties of men as follows —

"The illustrious and great Rishis cite a verse sung by Narayana himself, highly important and endowed with high ascetic merit. Hear me as I repeat it. By truth, simplicity, worship of guests, acquisition of religion and profit, an enjoyment of one's own married wife, one should enjoy various kinds of happiness both here and hereafter. The great Rishis have said that the maintenance of sons and wives and the study of the Vedas are the duties of those who follow this high mode of life. That Brahmana who, always engaged in the celebration of sacrifices, duly passes this mode of life and properly discharges all its duties, obtains blessed rewards in Heaven. Upon his death, the rewards sought by him become eternal. Indeed these wait upon him for eternity like servants ever careful to execute the orders of their master. Always studying the Vedas, silently reciting the mantras obtained from his preceptor, worshipping all the gods, O Yudhishtira dutifully attending upon and serving his preceptor with his own body smeared with clay and filth, the person, leading the Brahmacharyya mode of life, should always observe rigid vows and, with senses under restraint, should always pay attention to the instructions he has received. Meditating on the Vedas and satisfying all the duties he should live, dutifully serving his preceptor and always bowing to him. Unengaged in the six kinds of work and never doing with attachment any kind of acts, never showing favour or disfavour to anyone, and doing good even to his enemies,—those, O son, are the duties of a Brahmacharin."‡

This seems to be the essence of the Bharata Samhita, which Narayana preached to Narada.

"Bhisma said —From acts originate various ties of affection and from those ties of affection spring sorrow or misery and from acts imbued with joy and sorrow proceeds the liability to birth and death. On account of the obligation of birth, one is compelled to live within the womb,—for the union of vital seed and blood. Living there is defiled with excreta, urine and phlegm, and always fouled with blood that is created there. Overwhelmed by thirst, the Intelligent Soul

\* Chapter LIX, Shanti Parva, verses 131—131.

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LIX, page 87, verses 139—144.

‡ The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LXI, verses 13—21.

becomes fettered by anger and the rest that have been described above. It seeks, however, to escape these evils. In this respect women must be considered as instruments which are the stream of Creation going. By their nature, women are *Kalees* and men are *Kshetrajnas* in respect of qualities. Therefore, wise persons should not pursue women especially. Indeed women are like dreadful *Manas* persons. They stupify persons short of wisdom. They are sunk in the quality of Darkness. They are the eternal embodiment of the senses. On account of the strong desire for children for women offspring proceed from them, due to the action of the seminal fluid. As one throws off from his person such vermin as are born from him as worms, on that account any part of oneself, so should one cast off these vermin of one's body that are called children who, though regarded as one's own are not his own in so far as from the seminal fluid and a new creature springs from his body, influenced by pristine acts or in the course of nature. Therefore a wise man should feel no regret for them. The quality of Darkness rests on that of Ignorance. The quality of foolishness again, rests on that of Darkness. Darkness which is unmanifest overpowers itself on knowledge, and creates the phenomena of intelligence and consciousness. That knowledge possessing these attributes of intelligence and consciousness has been described as the seed of individual soul. This again which is the seed of such knowledge is called the *Jiva* (individual soul). On account of its nature and the virtue of time the soul goes through birth and repeat rounds of rebirth. As in a dream the soul plays as if invested with a body which of course leads to the action of the mind similarly, it gets in the material world with a body in consequence of qualities and propensities created by pristine deeds.\*

This is the theory of the transmigration of souls and the theory of Karma which the Yoga system of Yajnavalkya preaches, as is shown in the degraded births of elephant and tortoise which forms the prologue of the great Epic by Yajnavalkya. The different editions give different versions. For instance, in the Puranic Mahabharata the Pandava represented different Vedic gods Indra, Marut, Aswin Kumars in another the five forms of Indra. The different editions are jumbled together and revised, which makes the current Mahabharata so very mysterious and irreparable. Sutras made it a royal panegyric. What it really was is said in Chapter CCXVII —

"The sage Narayana described the religion of Inclination on which rests the entire creation. The religion of renunciation leads to the eternal unmanifest *Brahma*."

The relationship of *Parusha* and Supreme Soul is described as follows —

"*Bhisma* said — A person putting on a turban has his head circled with three folds of a piece of cloth. Similarly the embodied Soul is invested with the three qualities of Goodness, Darkness, and Ignorance. But though thus invested, the soul is not identical with those qualities. Hence these four topics, which are covered by these four considerations, should be understood. One who understands all this is never stupified when he tries to form conclusions. He who wishes to secure high prosperity should become pure in mind, and practising austere practices regarding the body and the senses, should devote himself to Yoga without seeking for fruits"†

\* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXIII, Shanti Parva, page 317, verses 5—14

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXVII, Shanti Parva, page 322, verses 11—14.

During the ascendancy of Buddhist religion, Puranas and Epics were traduced and misused for the propagation of the Buddhist religion. Examples are not wanting and European learned men like Dr Winternitz could think of introducing it in a book as follows —

"Draupadi, however, one of the most magnificent female characters of the Ipu, appears in the Jataka as an example of feminine depravity, as she is not content with her five husbands, but also commits adultery with a hunch backed rascal."

In this way Buddhist literature tried to undo the works of Hindu authors. The fragments of old Hindu sacred books were reconstructed during the Hindu revival after the Buddhist fall. It was then 'Adhyatma-Ramayana' gave out that Balmiki lived among robbers though a Brahmin by birth. This was also quoted by the same learned author with other denunciations of the great author.

"Balmik, i.e., Valmiki, is worshipped as a kind of saint by the caste of the scavengers in Eastern Punjab. (The legends of Punjab I (1884), page 529f. †

All these speak of the light in which the Western scholar treats the reputed Hindu poet Valmiki in his book. What should have been treated with contempt has found an honoured place in his book.

Yogavasistha is treated as an appendix to the Ramayana by Dr Keith. It was summarised in the 9th century by Guḍḍa Abhinanda in the Yogavasisthasara (p 480). Suffice it to mention here that Valmiki has been shown to be a Vedic grammarian and a learned descendant of the well-known Bhrigu family. He was only accused of finding fault with Sagniek or Agnihotric Brahmanas for which he expiated. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata. Nor is this all. Yajñavalkya's edition of the Mahabharata lingers in the Astika Parva, and in certain comparisons where Valmiki and Vyasa are mentioned. The following portion of Chapter LV will speak for itself —

"O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifices of Goya, king Sashavindu, and king Visravana. Blessings be upon those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifices of Ariga, Ajameda, and (Rama) the son of Dasaratha. Blessings be upon those who are dear to us! O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifice of king Yndhisthira, the son of a deity and a descendant of Ajameda race, famous even in Heaven. Blessings upon those who are dear to us! O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifice of Krishna Dwaipayana, the son of Satyawati, in which he himself acted as the chief priest. Blessings be upon those who are dear to us! These (learned men), that are sitting here, are as

\*Dr Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature," Volume I, page 472.

†Dr Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature," page 503, Foot note

eFulgent as the sun, and they make your this sacrifice like the sacrifice of the slayer of Vitra (Indra) There is nothing for them to know, and gifts made to them become inexhaustible There is not a RitwiJa in all the worlds equal to your RitwiJa Dwaipayana. His disciples, becoming Ritwijas, competent in their duties, travel over the earth The noble bearer of libations, Vivavasu and Chitravanu (fire), having gold for his vital seed and black smokes on its way, carries these your libations of ghee to the celestials There is no other king in this world equal to you in protecting his subjects I am well pleased with your continual abstinence You are either Varuna, Yama or Dharmaraja You are the protector of all creatures in this world, like Indra himself, thunder-bolt in hand There is no man in this world so great as you There is no king who is your equal in sacrifices You are like Kshatwaga, Nobhaga, and Deelip You are like Jayati and Mandhata in prowess You are equal to the Sun in splendour O royal sage of excellent vows, you are like Bhishma You are like Valmiki of power concealed. Like Vasishtha you have controlled your anger Your sovereignty is like that of Indra and your splendour like that of Narayana You are learned in the administration of justice like Yama, and you are adorned with all qualifications like Krishna You are the home of the wealth that belongs to the Vasus, you are the main spring of all sacrifices You are equal to Damodhara in strength, you are learned both in Sastras and arms like Parasurama You are equal to Arjuna and Bhishma in strength You inspire terror with your looks like Vajrasena \*\*\*

There is a clear reference to Krishna Dwaipayana and RitwiJa Dwaipayana in Janmejaya's sacrifice Are they one and the same person or different persons? But it cannot be overlooked that one was the chief priest in Yudhishthira's sacrifice and the other was a RitwiJa in that of Janmejaya, a space of time of four generations But Vyasa was made immortal If this was really so, then the great Epics and Puranas would have come down to the present day intact There would have been hardly any occasion for revisions and reconstructions It seems that the Dwaipayana family were the priests of the Pandava family

Vyasa and Valmiki, the great authors of the Indian Epics, wrote their books to reform the evil inclinations of the kings and their subjects, and to establish law, order, and peace in the realm with the high ideal of religious emancipation Rama and Krishna, with their ancillary co-operators, were represented as the most cultured men of the age They were revered and worshipped as gods and demi-gods by their admirers, but they refused to be satisfied with such associations and did their duties as common men This is quite evident in both the Epics Man is God and God is man, it is the action which decides who is who. This is the clear preaching of the Indian Epics What Valmiki could not fulfil in his Ramayana, Vyasa did in his Mahabharata Man passes to heaven and God comes to earth through the process of birth and death, but Vyasa discovered a new path Man can be translated to heaven in person, and Yudhishthira and Sudarshana, two kings, did so as self-conquered heroes who were not overcome by the illusion or Maya practised

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\* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LV, verses 4-16, page 74.



by their queens. The theory of evolution of man to God was fully established in Rama and Krishna, who died like ordinary mortals.

The piercing of the arrow in love affairs is mentioned in the Atharva Veda, where Kama is a Hindu god of marriage who is invested with five arrows to arouse the dormant five senses of man by woman. The Puranas say that the first marriage of Siva and Parvati was sanctified by actual flinging of the arrows, but the process was not approved of by the great God Siva. He assigned the place of the God Kama in the mind of man and woman, but the great Epic author centred it differently in Draupadi and Yudhisthira. The marriage of Draupadi took place in the piercing of the arrow by Arjuna (Kama), instrumental in the ceremony itself, to ignite love between Draupadi and Yudhisthira according to the Atharva Veda. Draupadi with all her beauty and culture failed to subdue the five senses of Yudhisthira. The ideal Yudhisthira was not found wanting in sufficient self-control and self-sacrifice to ascend to heaven in person, which Rama and Krishna could not do.

The theory of evolution is nowhere better established in the theory and practice of religion than in the great Epic. Whoever might be the author of this conception he was a great man worthy of being adored with the immortality of Vyasa. It must be a source of sincere gratification to the Hindus that the glory of the great Epic cannot be obliterated in spite of the vast mass of accretion, interpolation and anachronism which has offered specious grounds for all sorts of speculations and unjust accusations. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were recast one after the other, as there is a great resemblance between Meghnada and Arjuna, Bhima and Kumbhukarna, Sita and Draupadi. Arjuna was represented in the Mahabharata more as a knight errant and married Chitrangada, Ulupi and Subhadra when he was to observe Brahmacharya.

The Mahabharata says that Arjuna had dispelled the false fears of Yudhisthira before the great battle took place, whereas Gita describes Arjuna as a coward, and Sri Krishna could not make him fight until and unless he showed him his Birat Murti (figure). Gita is Upanishad and Mahabharata is not. It is clearly mentioned in the table of contents that Sanjaya made an Upanishad to solace King Dhritarashtra, who was overwhelmed with grief after the battle. Gita seems to have been such an Upanishad, where Sri Krishna plays a different role from that of the Mahabharata, as also Arjuna. Everything is ascribed to Sri Krishna's greatness as a God. Gita describes that the Birat Murti (figure) is witnessed by Arjuna alone, but the Mahabharata describes Sri Krishna's assuming such appearance before the Kuru Court when Duryodhana

intended to imprison him and before the sage Uttamka when he was going to curse him for not preventing the great carnage which took place in the great field of Kurukshetra. There is a discourse between Sanjaya and Dhritarastra to this effect in the Mahabharata. This might be the Kuru Mahabharata, which the Western scholars found.

The Macedonian invasion of India could make no impression on the minds of the Indian people. During the Buddhistic period inscriptions on rocks and columns were the means of declaration of edicts in the empire. During this period of Buddhistic influence on Hindu society, worship and religion was very great. The revision, which took place in the days of the celebrated king Vikramaditya, was a dramatic edition of the Epic. Before the Hindu religion had sufficient time to be reorganised, the Moslem rule greatly interfered with such lasting reorganisation. Akbar was not a man of letters but an inborn politician and administrator. It struck him when he came to the throne as a mere boy under the care of Bairam Khan, that he should not be a boy who would be managed but a master of people who would be obeyed. He was thoroughly independent and a great patron of literature and a wise religious man. He was convinced in his own mind that it would be impossible to rule India by standing armies without taking into account their sentiments. The bigotry and narrowness evinced by the leaders of the various Moslem sects disgusted Akbar. He conceived the great idea of unity in the creed of Islam and liked to be the spiritual guide of his subjects.

"Man's outward profession and the mere letter of Muhammadanism, without a heartfelt conviction, can avail nothing. I have forced many Brahmans, by fear of my power, to adopt the religion of my ancestors, but now that my mind has been enlightened with the beams of truth, I have become convinced that the dark clouds of conceit and the mist of self opinion have gathered round you, and that not a step can be made in advance without the torch of proof. That course only can be beneficial which we select with clear judgment. To repeat the words of the creed, to perform circumcision or to be prostrated on the ground from the dread of kingly power, can avail nothing in the sight of God —

"Obedience is not in prostration on the earth

Practice sincerity, for righteousness is not borne upon the brow,"

"Attached as Akbar was to his learned and liberal minded friends Fuzi and Abulfazl, he encouraged all who displayed a real love for learning and a true desire to acquire knowledge. He hated pretence and hypocrisy. He soon recognised that these two qualities underlay the professions of the Ulama (Muhammadan doctors of learning) at his court. When he had found them out, he was disgusted with them, and resolved to spare no means of showing up their pretensions. He never pardoned, writes Professor Blochmann, 'pride and conceit, the conceit of learning was most hateful to him. Hence the cry of the class. Fed by his action that he discouraged learning and learned men, he did nothing for the sort. Therefore has flourished in India a large number of ignorant scholars'."

\* Colonel G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR and the rise of the Mughal Empire," page 162.

† Colonel G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR and the rise of the Mughal Empire," page 162.

"It would seem that Akbar paid great attention to the storing in his library of works obtained from outside his dominions as well as of those Hindu originals and their translations which he was always either collecting or having rendered into Persian. Of this library the author of the *Ain* relates that it was divided into several parts. 'Some of the books are kept within, some without the Harem. Each part of the library is sub-divided according to the value of the books and the estimation in which the sciences are held of which the books treat. Prose Books, Poetical Works, Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmirian, Arabic are all separately placed. In this order they are also inscribed. Experienced people bring them daily, and read them before his Majesty, who hears every book from the beginning to the end. At a later or prior time the readers daily stop his Majesty makes with his own pen a mark according to the number of the pages, and rewards the readers with presents of cash either in gold or silver, according to the number of leaves read out by them. Among books of renown there are few which are not read in his Majesty's Assembly Hall, and there are no historical facts of past ages or curiosities of science or interesting points of philosophy, with which his Majesty, a lover of impartial ages, is unacquainted.' Then follows a long list of books specially affected by the sovereign, some of which have been referred to in preceding pages. I have I think stated enough to show the influence exercised by literary men and literature on the history of this reign. The influence, especially of the two learned brothers, Faizi and Abulfazi, dominated as long as they lived. That of Abulfazi survived him for the lessons he had taught only served to confirm the natural disposition of his master. The principles which the brothers loved were the principles congenial to the disposition of Akbar. They were the principles of the widest toleration of opinion, of justice to all independently of caste and creed, of alleviating the burdens resting on the children of the soil, of the welding together of the interests of all classes of the community, of the Rajput prince, proud of his ancient descent and inclined to regard the Muhammadan invader as an outcast and a stranger, of the Uzbek and Mughal noble too apt to regard the country as his own by right of conquest and its peoples as fit only to be his slaves, of the settlers of Afghan origin, who during four centuries had mingled with, and become a recognised part of the children of the soil, of the indigenous inhabitants, always ready to be moved by kindness and good treatment."

"He had much confidence in his own judgment of men. He was admittedly a good physiognomist. Abulfazi wrote of him that 'he sees through some men at a glance', whilst even Badami admits the claim, though with his usual inclination to sneering at all matters bearing on the Hindus, he declares that Akbar obtained the gift of insight from the Jogis (Hindu ascetics or magicians)."

"Akbar had not reigned long ere he recognised the importance of attaching to his throne the Hindu princes of Rajputana by a tie closer even than that of mere friendship. It is interesting to note how he managed to overcome the inborn prejudices of the high caste princes of Rajasthan to consent to a union which, in their hearts, the bulk of them regarded as a degradation. It would seem that his father, Humayun, had to a certain extent prepared the way. In his erudite and fascinating work, Colonel Tod relates how Humayun in the earlier part of his reign, became the knight of the princess Kurnavati of Chitor, and pledged himself to her service. That service he loyally performed. He addressed her always as 'dear and virtuous sister'. He also won the regard of Raja Behari Mall of Amber, father of Bhagwan Das, so often mentioned in these pages. Akbar subsequently married his daughter, and becoming thus connected with the House of Amber (Jaipur), could count upon

\* Col. G. B. Malletson's 'Akbar' and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 169-71.

† Col. G. B. Malletson's "Akbar" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 173-79.

Blagwan Das and his nephew and adopted son Man Singh, one of the greatest of all his commanders, as his firmest friends. Writing in another page of Blagwan Das, Colonel Tod describes him as 'the friend of Akbar, who saw the value of attaching a lion to his throne. He said, 'and few men have ever enjoyed better success in ascertaining the real feelings of the princes of Rajputana, but the name of Blagwan Das is excused as the first who sullied Rajput purity by matrimonial alliance with the Islamite. Prejudice is always strong and nowhere stronger than in caste.'

"Akbar," writes Colonel Tod "was the real founder of the empire of the Moghuls, the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence. To this end his virtues were powerful auxiliaries such as his skill in the analysis of the mind and its reactions. His sharp vision of human nature enabled him to find the chains with which he bound them. Tod also tells us he was familiarised by habit, especially when the throne exerted its power in a general way, as a national unity, or even in ministering to the more humble passions."

His first wife was his cousin, a daughter of his uncle, Humayun Mirza. She bore him two children, and survived him, living to the age of eighty-four. His second wife was also a cousin, being the daughter of a daughter of Babar, who had married Ghias-ud-din Muhammad. She was a poetess, and wrote under the nom-de-plume 'Makhdum-ul-cun-sayid'. His third wife was the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Mall and sister of Raja Bhagwan Das. He married her in 1560. The fourth wife was famed for her beauty, she had been previously married to Abdul Wasir. The fifth wife, mother of Jahangir, was a Jodhpur princess, Jodh Bai. As mother of the Emperor, she held the first place in the harem. The sixth, seventh, and eighth wives were Muhammadans.

Under instruction from Akbar Badauni translated the Ramayana from its original Sanskrit into Persian as well as part of the Mahabharata. His historical work is also referred to as the *Tarikh-i-Badauni*, and which is perhaps better known under its alternative title *Muntal-habul-Tawarikh*, or *Selections from the Annals*. It is especially valuable for the views it gives of the religious opinions of Akbar and its sketches of the famous men of his reign. Badauni died about eleven years before the Emperor and his great work, the existence of which he had carefully concealed, did not appear until a long time during the reign of Jahangir. It is a very favourite book with the bigoted Muhammadans who disliked the innovations of Akbar, and it continued to be more and more prized as those innovations gradually gave way to the revival of persecution for thought sake. It is perhaps unnecessary to give a record of the other learned men who contributed by their abilities, their industry, and their learning to the literary glory of the reign of Akbar. The *Immortal Ain* contains a complete list of them, great and small. But, as concerning the encouragement given to arts and letters by the sovereign himself, it is fitting to add a few words.\* ‡

Badauni, the translator of the Indian Epics, was a remarkably pious, learned, orthodox Moslem, two years older than the Emperor

\* Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 181-182

† Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, page 183

‡ Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 184-185.

§ Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 168-169

The truth the Emperor employed to learn the literature of the Hindus are not well-known. It is given below from the well-known Dow's history of Hindustan —

"Mohammad Akbar being a Prince of elevated and extensive ideas, was totally divested of those prejudices for his own religion which men of inferior parts not only imbibe with their mother's milk but retain throughout their lives. Though bred in all the strictness of the Mahomedan faith his great soul, in his riper years broke those chains of superstition and credulity with which his tutors had, in his early youth fettered his mind. With a design to choose his own religion, or rather from curiosity he made it his business to inquire minutely into all the systems of divinity which prevailed among mankind. The story of his being instructed in the Christian tenets by a missionary from Portugal is too well known in Europe to require a place in this Dissertation. As almost all religions admit of proselytes Akbar had good success in his inquiries till he came to his own subjects the Hindus. Contrary to the practice of all other religious sects, they admit of no converts, but they allow that every one may go to Heaven his own way, though they perhaps suppose that there is the most expeditious method to obtain that important end. They choose rather to make a mystery of their religion, than impose it upon the world like the Mahomedans with the sword, or by means of the stake, after the manner of some pious Christians. Not all the authority of Akbar could prevail with the Brahmins to reveal the principles of their faith. He was therefore obliged to have recourse to artifice to obtain the information which he so much desired. The Emperor for this purpose concerted a plan with his Chief Secretary, Abdul Fazl to impose here, then a boy, upon the Brahmins in the character of a poor orphan of their tribe. Fazl being instructed in his part, was privately sent to Benares the principal seat of learning among the Hindus. In that city the fraud was practised on a learned Brahmin who received the boy into his house and educated him as his own son. When Fazl, after ten years study, had acquired the Sanskrit language and all the knowledge of which the learned of Benares were possessed, proper measures were taken by the Emperor to secure his safe return. It seems during his residence with his patron, the Brahmin, was smitten with the charms of his only daughter; and indeed the ladies of the Brahmin race are the handsomest in Hindustan. The old Brahmin saw the mutual passion of the young pair with pleasure, and as he loved Fazl for his uncommon abilities he offered him his daughter in marriage. Fazl, perplexed between love and gratitude, at length discovered himself to the good old man, fell down at his feet and grasping his knees, solicited with tears forgiveness for the great crime he had committed against his indulgent benefactor. The Brahmin, struck dumb with astonishment uttered not one word of reproach. He drew a dagger which he always carried on his girdle, and prepared to plunge it in his own breast. Fazl seized his hand, and conjured him, that if yet any atonement could be made for the injury he had done him he himself would swear to deny him nothing. The Brahmin, bursting into tears, told him, that if Fazl should grant him two requests, he would forgive him, and consent to live. Fazl, without any hesitation, consented, and the Brahmin's requests were, that he should never translate the Vedas, nor repeat the creed of the Hindus. How far Fazl was bound by his oath not to reveal the doctrine of the Vedas to Akbar, is uncertain, but that neither he, nor any other person, ever translated those books is a truth beyond any dispute. It is, however, well known that the Emperor afterwards greatly favoured the Hindu faith, and gave much offence to zealous Mahomedans, by practising some Indian customs which they thought savoured of idolatry. But the dispassionate part of

marks and have always allowed that Akbar was equally directed of all the follies of both the religious superstitions which prevailed among his subjects."

It is said of him that he wanted to be converted into a Brahman and asked his witty minister Birbal to devise means for it. The latter did not flatly refuse to the Emperor's face but took his time, and when questioned his answer was significant, viz., that he had found from experience that horse and ass produced mule, which was not worthy of estimation. When Akbar failed thus he resorted to other ways. It is evident that he hated the proud Rājput princes, who prided themselves on being descended from the Solar or Lunar dynasties of ancient Kshatriya race, agree to marry their daughter and sister to him or his son, though it was regarded as the greatest degradation and made them lose their caste. How it was preserved can well be imagined. Their ancestral history recorded in the Mahabharata must have been changed or destroyed as he would find in their way. It was for this reason that the whole of the Rāmāyana and the parts of the Mahabharata which were interpolated, were translated.

During the Mogul rule in India some of the worst interpolations took place as the Kings of India were forced to make inter-marriages with the Mogul family and in order to justify such alliances, the Yabans were described as the descendants of the Pota family in the great Epic. The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was responsible for it. He was not tolerant in the carrying of his reign.

The great Emperor did everything to make himself the ruler of all India and master of all religions, which culminated in his being the founder of a religion and the Hindus paid him daily respect as a God and were made to believe that he was a Hindu Jogi in his previous life at Allahabad.

"Inside the palace are a library, an Arsenal and a Tishakhana, or Treasure House. The library is rich in Sanskrit and Persian MSS. which certain skilful scribes are copying. It contains some marvellous illuminated scrolls, some ancient horoscopes, and one special copy of the Gulistan, for which it would be almost justifiable to break the last Commandment. The book has been valued even by local bibliophiles at £2000, but is beyond price for the purity of its script, and the splendid colour and delicacy of its pictures. Some one at Ulwar ought to reproduce these beautiful medieval designs, as Dr. Hordley has popularised at Jaypore those of the Mahabharata, executed by order of Akbar the Great."

"A small gate to the west next brings you to the Chanda Mahal, or 'Silver House' the heart and marrow of all this immense abode. Seven stories of such cold and lovely structure as you could expect to see only in dreams rise here one above the other in rose and snow white balconies, oriels, arches, pilasters, lattices, and domes—gay everywhere with frescoes and floral ornaments. In the lowest floor, which is kept—like the second and third—is a winter residence, we

\* Alexander Dow's 'History of Hindustan,' pages 22—24

† Professor Edwin Arnold's 'India revisited,' pages 167 168.

are permitted to inspect a priceless volume, the abstract of the Mahabharata in Persian made by the orders of Akbar the Great at a cost of forty thousand pounds, and illustrated in the most exquisite manner with coloured and gilded miniature pictures all of an incredible delicacy."

Rajput Chiefs allege that they trace their descent from the family of Rama through Kusa and they preserve the copy of the translation of Akbar's Mahabharata and not of Vyasa or Vasampayana and exhibit it to travellers. This will show how Akbar succeeded in inter-marrying with the daughters of Rajput princes and in making inter-relation from the time of Yadu's brother that Yaban descended from the line of Tarbisu. This is the way interpolations in the great Epic were introduced so late as the Moslem rule in India, and what had happened before will be better imagined than described. The rhapsodists in Bengal massacred the Indian Epics, converting them into mere poetry of imagination to tell upon the mad imagination of the mass, and Kritis and Kasis caught the infection and departed materially from the original texts of even the metamorphosed Epics.

It would have been well if the Indian Epics were revised and recovered. Critics are like whetstones, not able to cut themselves but making iron sharp and capable of cutting. The knowledge of men and women and their manners is the first principle and fountain-head of good writing. The object of poetry is to make the mind catch the precepts and divine love more easily and retain them. Tulsidas made the Ramayana popular in the North West Provinces and he is even now worshipped in a temple at Benares. He was reputed to be a great devotee of Rama who brought to life a dead man by his power, and it is even now believed. Tulsidas followed the path of Ramanuja, who flourished in the Deccan and made a philosophy of his own, wrote a note on the Ramayana and proved that the Vedanta Sutra bore out his school of philosophy. His name, like Sankaracharya, is associated with the Hindu revival in India and its stand against the Jain religion. Kabir, who was one of his famous disciples, later on had disciples among both Hindus and Moslems and he convinced them that with the religion of God the body had no connection but that it was the spirit of love which was the essence of religion. The performance of the last rites on his dead body is a well-known episode. The Hindus wanted to cremate the body according to Hindu rites and the Moslems wanted to do it according to their custom, but were astonished when they could not find the dead body when the sheet was opened.

Apart from the subsequent revisions of the Mahabharata, it is certain that the discourse between Sounakya and Sauti did not belong to the

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\* Professor Edwin Arnold's "India re-visited," pages 148 149





with Hariyansa. This Saunaka, like Sri Chaitanya, destroyed his own Sutra to make Asvalayana famous.

There was one Sabha of Sakaly another of Pashlala taking these two Samhitā, and the twenty-one Brāhmanas the Aitareya and completing it with other 'Saunaka' covered by numbers of great Uśa\* composed the first Kalpa-sūtra. The story of Saunaka's son of Saunahotra and grandson of Bharadvaja being born again as Gṛtsamala Saunaka may have some historical foundation, and the only way in which it can be interpreted is that the second Mandala, being originally seen by Gṛtsamala of the family of Bhṛigu was afterwards preserved by Saunahotra a descendant of Bharadvaja of the race of Angirsa who entered the family of Bhṛigu took the name of Saunaka and added one hymn the twelfth, in praise of Indra. This is partly confirmed by Katyavana's Anukramani and by the Rishyanukramani of Saunaka. It would by no means follow that Saunaka was the author of the hymns of the second Mandala. The hymns of that Mandala belong to Gṛtsamada of the Bhṛigu race. But Saunaka may have adopted that Mandala, and by adding one hymn may have been said to have made it his own. Again it does not concern us at present whether Saunaka the author of the Kalpa-sūtra was the same as Saunaka the chief of the sage's in the Naimishikya forest to whom during the great twelve years sacrifice Ugrasrava related the Mahābhārata and who became the teacher of Satanka the son of Janmejaya. If this identity could be established a most important link would be gained connecting Saunaka and his literary activity with another period of Indian literature.\*

The dramatic Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana preach the great lesson of the ancient chivalry of India, that one ascends to heaven if one dies for the country and that death pursues a coward like Duryodhana, who flies from danger, and gives no quarter to the timid and unchivalrous, a youth who depends on others and cannot stand on his own legs. There are brave men like Bhishma and Drona who die in the front ranks and do not care for their old age.

Dr Holtzman first propounded the great and novel theory that the traditional stock of legends was first worked up into its present shape by some Buddhist poets who showed a great predilection for the Kuru party. The early history of the Indian drama is lost in mystery, but nevertheless the sage Bharata is said to have been the author of the first drama in India and the name Mahābhārata lends colour to it as a great drama. The term Bharata signifies originally an actor. It is quite possible that after the great war the incidents were dramatised and served the purpose of the chief amusement as well as teaching the lessons of religion at public places of entertainment. The man, the chief actor who dramatised the Epic, received the epithet Bharata. Dr Keith says

"Prakrit is what comes at once from nature, what all people without special instruction can easily understand and use"†

Asoka inscriptions were all written in Prakrit language. During the Buddhistic age Prakrit must have been the spoken tongue and

\* Professor Keith's "History of Sanskrit Literature," page 26

† Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 232-233

Sanskrit dramas bear this out. The dramatic Epics belong to an age prior to Asoka and Vikramaditya. Dr Keith says :

"To Kalidasa are ascribed, without any plausibility, various stotras, including the Gyaladandaka mainly in prose, the Sarasvati stotra and the Mangalastaka, which can be reconstructed from the Tibetan of the Tanjur."

All these establish Tibetan influence in Indian literature. The didactic tales in the Indian Epics aimed directly at edification rather than amusement, and the dramatic way of putting the subjects with interpolations and alterations of truths made them very attractive to the ignorant general public. Even the incidents of King Vikramaditya's life were spoilt in this way with all sorts of ghost stories and mad adventures and reflections on the customs, manners and religious beliefs of the age. The true incidents of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were thus traduced by the dramatist Buddhist teachers of Tibet, who introduced their own customs and manners in the heroes and heroines of the Epic and made them their own property.

The heroine of the dramatic Mahabharata is Draupadi, but she is not even mentioned in the table of contents of the original Mahabharata, where only the names of Kunti and Gandhari are mentioned. This gives the clue to the said transformation of the original Mahabharata into the dramatic form in which the Mahabharata is now presented to the world. This reconstruction of the dramatic Mahabharata has been full of didactic fables of ancient kings. The beast fables too found a place in it with fairy tales. Didactic stories became a definite mode of instruction in India, and a separate book called Panchatantra grew out of the Mahabharata, giving the morals and maxims of practical life. It may be said, not without some justification, that the well-known beast fables in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana prove the doctrine of transmigration.

The Buddhist works illustrate the deeds and greatness of the divine Buddha and his contemporaries in past births. It may safely be said that the dramatic Epics belong to that age. It is true that in the Chandogya Upanishada there are allegories and satire of the day, talk of instructions by a bull, etc (VII. 10.3) yet there was no question of transmigration. During the Buddhist period there was ample proof of the literary inter-communication between Tibet, Nepal, Kashmir, Guzerat and Southern India in the respective literatures of the different countries. It might be said with some degree of confidence that the well-

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\* Professor Keith's "History of Sanskrit Literature" page 218

† The tale of a mouse which became a tiger and was returned to its original state by the boon and curse of a hermit in the Mahabharata, and a Kulapati converted into a dog for vanity in the Ramayana, both are well-known.

known shrines of India must necessarily have been the places of the exploits of the great heroes, Avatars and literary prodigies of India. The Indian Epics were let alone for a considerable time and great poets like Kalidasa, Bhavbhuti, Bharavi, etc., embellished the different subjects of the Epics in their poems *Sakuntala*, *Raghuvansh*, *Kumarasambhava*, *Uttaramehariti*, *Kiritarjun*, *Narsidha*, etc. Besides all these, Ksemendra's *Bhaktikathamanguni* furnish how the Indian Epics played on the imagination of the Indian poets and authors.

'The tale is remarkable in its obvious blending of mythology involving Vedic and Epic beliefs, Buddhist legends and popular story matter, but in Ksemendra's hands it suffers greatly from excessive condensation'. In Book XI we have a sort of duplication of this adventure, he marries *Alankaravati*, and proceeds to an expedition to a White Island or Continent where he worships *Narayana* with an elaborate prayer written in the most finished *Kavya* style, the parallel to the famous episode of the *Mahabharata* in which sages seek the *Svetadvipa* and take part in the worship of a wonderful deity—which has been deemed a reference to actual experience of Nestorian rites or even of Alexandrian Christianity—is complete, and suggests very strongly that the Kashmirian or the original *Bhaktikatha* borrowed the episode from the Epic as we know it'†

The kind of audience the two Indian Epics had can be easily imagined from the time of their composition. The *Ramayana* is a *Kavya* and not so difficult as the *Mahabharata*. The *Mahabharata* is the great Epic in India. It was meant for the highly cultured audiences in the University of *Saunaka*. The author or the reviser had no chance of winning reputation and wealth by anything that was commonplace, like the simple *Ramayana*.

There was a very great Tibetan influence in India during the Buddhistic period and the great Epic was transformed during the Tibetan rule. Lt Col Waddell contributed a valuable article on the Tibetan Invasion of India in 647 A.D. and the historian Vincent Smith said that Arjuna, the minister of Emperor *Harsavardhana* and the usurper of his throne, could not reign but was taken as a prisoner to China after his defeat‡. *Frishtha* records that the Persian invasions of India took place after the disappearance of *Vasudeva*. That the incidents refer to *Mousal Parva* of the *Mahabharata* one can clearly see and the addition dates back to that time or after. *Sri Krishna Vasudeva* was a historical character.

It will be seen that the tradition of making the images of *Jagannath* etc., with the bones of *Sri Krishna*, *Subhadra* and *Balarama* and the building of the temple of *Jagannath* at *Puri* reconcile with the

\* Professor Keith's 'A History of Sanskrit Literature' page 277

† Professor Keith's "A History of Sanskrit Literature" page 279

‡ The *Mahabharata*, *Bana Parva*, page 367

time This was the memorial raised by the great Vasudev family or their adherents The Mousal Parva of the Mahabharata gives a picture of the history of the Yadav family Sri Krishna's exploits were recast and revised at the time of his descendants or devotees, who adopted such names as being auspicious. The history proves the time of revision and additions to the original Epic It seems possible that the dramatic revision took place in Bengal during the Tibetan supremacy in India for the obvious reason that the drama Beni Samhara was written in Bengal by Bhattanarayana, who was brought from Kanouj and settled in Gour

It is Tibetan influence which made Draupadi the wife of the five Pandavas and Kunti and Madhavi of four gods and kings, respectively It is Tibetan influence which introduced the Rakshasas in the two Epics instead of Asuras The beauties of Hill tribes, Apsaras and Gandharvas of Gandhar (Candahar) and Kashmir etc, were not left out of consideration to make the dramas attractive to the audience The characters in the Indian Epics were not the puppets of the dramatist's imagination They were all historical figures with their life stories altered to the type of a drama They were to instruct or to portray, to divert or to amuse and they proved successful; so much so that they secured immortality in the minds of the Indian readers or audience

They were more inclined to be of the psychological and philosophical order than of the narration or novel types They could not be meticulously accurate or even plausible in every detail In the interests of what is called realism the Epic revelations may prove interesting in that they were not carried to an absurd point of pedantry Life and drama can never be the time table of the actual life of past history. The authors of the dramatic Epics succeeded in their main effort of diverting the lay public from the immediate surroundings of actual lives to their imaginations of a life of activity, of romance, which cast a spell on the unity of religious faith, cult and doctrine in ancient India.

## EPIC AIM.

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In love and obedience are the origin of the moral and spiritual world. Obedience was a virtue of the first importance in every religion. Yajati proved it by giving the throne to Puru for his obedience. His daughter Madhabī gave birth to four sons to four kings to save her father from the debt of hospitality to Galava. Galava in order to pay the tuition fee of Visvāmitra, sought the help of king Yajati. The merit of this gift of Madhabī saved Yajati from falling from heaven. It was Madhabī who first refused to comply with the request of her father to marry someone by a Svayambara ceremony. She took to religious austerities as she realised the nothingness of earthly love by the enjoyment of four kings and their luxuries. The yearning of the soul and not of the mind must be satisfied and that is why real chastity of body is to be prized above all. Birds and beasts fight for their mates and sometimes die. In cultural society chastity of mind and soul is to be prized above all. The functions of the body require medical help and society cannot take any objection to it. In the practice and learning of discipline no pitfalls are taken into account.

Eternal punishment was not the law in early ancient India.

"Even if the most wicked worship me (God) with due concentration of mind, he too must be considered righteous for he rightly resolved and atoned his sins" (Gita, Chap. 12, verse 30).

Eve transgressed the law of God and for that not only did she suffer but her children shared the same fate—this ideal is not consistent with that of the Hindus. The example of Madhabī presents the custom that the chastity of a girl depends on her obedience to her parents and not to the observance of virtue. Woman was created for the propagation of the race, and that part of her work a woman was in duty bound to fulfil, in doing so if she was not at all stained with passion that was considered ideal. Proof of such chastity Madhabī gave when she refused to marry after obeying the command of her father and fulfilling the purpose of meeting the demand for a tuition fee of poor Galava and satisfying the passionate royal sage Visvāmitra, the great preceptor of the day. She controlled her senses and concentrated on realising the divine love within the heart developed in the exercise of virtue. Her children did not fight but were all great men of India with whose accounts the Bharata Samhita deals.

The idea of sin is man's creation. The unbridled license of poets ranges from earth to heaven and pays little regard to the truth behind

ancient history Evil disposition is sin It is easier to do evil than good to others. The true disposition of the soul within is to do good to others. The dying English hero is remembered for offering to a dying soldier, a glass of water presented to him, saying "Thy necessity is greater than mine" This is virtue practised for its own sake which the ancient Hindus valued more than anything Man and woman are born to assist one another and if they meet in the same spirit as the chaste Madhabī did, there can be no sin or carnality If she had married by Svyambara then she would have been guilty of committing sin.

Heavenly genius springs more quickly than poets can discover Genius is a more precious gift of heaven above than the riches that kings bestow on poets to sing their praises Light service charms light minds, and it is for this the ancient ideal of chastity which Madhabī represents in the days of Yajati is hard to realise by ordinary man It was the great conception of Vyasa along with the example of king Sudarsana and Uddalaka, offering their wives to guests as a paramount duty to prove to the world that they were men of self-control and that passion and envy could not overcome them Those who envy, like Milton's Satan, pine in disgrace and come down from heaven, but those who are envied thrive in prosperity and rule in heaven Sudarsana went to heaven for this, conquering death Envy is death The account of him opens first in the Anusasana Parva of the Mahabharata Evil habits soil a fine dress one puts on to make one look beautiful more than mud and dust, but good deeds set off a lowly garb or any calumny thrown upon it

Ancient India presents to the world as examples of the cleansing of the sins of the body and mind such names of illustrious Indians as Ahalya, Draupadī, Tara, Kuntī and Mandodari It is true, night covers all blemishes and every flaw is forgiven, but ancient India believed in confessing what is concealed by the darkness of night. Ahalya, the wife of the great sage Gautama, was the Indian Lucretia. The custom or law of a country is not universal and that cannot be the standard of virtue or vice If one vanquishes one's own bad inclinations and is not overcome by them, then one enjoys real happiness and he or she may really be called chaste. The good disposition and conduct of man and woman are conditions precedent to chastity and virtue, for it proves that one refrains from doing wrong when one has the power to do so.

Epic literature owes its origin to the evolution or revolution of the Indo-Aryan social, moral, philosophical and religious institutions It was then considered a necessity for establishing goodwill and peace on a

religious and moral basis amongst all classes so that they might come under the grand conception of a nationality of greater India in the conception of universal love of God and humanity. The historical and geographical traditions of ancient literature, philosophical and theological theories, and the founders of the royal houses of India are thus closely connected with the Epic. A study of the history of ancient civilisation from various aspects since its origin is as instructive as it is important to get at the root of the plot the Epic demonstrates. The Hindu Purans have five aspects—firstly, as history of general creation, secondly, as history of special creations, thirdly, as histories of families, fourthly, as histories of different ages, and fifthly, as accounts of great men. The Epics of India are not Puranas. The Puranas were the productions of various writers to propound their special dogmas and doctrines.

The Vedas, full of hymns of worship to the presiding deities of Nature or Natural phenomena, the Upanishads, full of reasoning and knowledge, and the philosophies with the ideal form of God in Narayana, failed to inspire the world with true feelings of religion, of peace and enlightenment. The inspired ancient sages, with a view to preserve harmony in the ancient religion of India, produced a new literature showing the four stages of human life analogous to the four seasons of the year. Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Spring brings life and feeling, Summer playful gaiety and enjoyment, Autumn is the time for depositing eggs and Winter the time for fading and cold. Human life is a succession of literature and utility. The Veda, Upanishad and Philosophy of ancient India failed to produce an united nation, but rather led to the creation of conflicting interests and sectarian strife.

The story of re-generation of the Kshatriya race is given in Chapter L, Shanti Parva, after the cruel extermination of Parasurama, which describes how the children of the different royal houses were saved and gives the relationship of the Bhṛigu family to the royal sage Visvamitra. It was the great sage Kasyapa who saved the Kshatriya race from being defiled by Sudras and Vaisyas and stopped anarchy on earth. It was he who installed them on their fathers' thrones, exiling Parasurama out of India, in the same fashion as Bāli, the great Asura, was dethroned from heaven by Bamaṇa (the dwarf) incarnation of the God Vishnu. This chapter has reference to the Poulama Parva and it begins with the family account of Jāhnu, the royal Vedic sage, who was contemporary with Bhagiratha and was the god-father of the river Ganges. Nor is this all. In the second chapter of the Adi Parva the reciter, Sauti, was said to have been returning from the bloody but holy place of Samanta Panchak, the five lakes of the blood of Kshatriya carnage, and with

those bloody waters the fiery Parasurama offered oblation to the manes of his ancestors where the Kurus and Pandavas fought their fateful bloody battle. Necessarily the chapter in question is of very great historical importance and translations of the portions which refer to those kings of India are given here below —

"Ishnu had a son named Rajas. Rajas had a son named Valakashwa. King Valakashwa had a pious son named Kushika. Kushika's son was known by the name of Gadhi. Gadhi had a daughter, O king, by the name of Satyawati. The powerful Gadhi married her to Richika, a descendant of Bhrigu. Satyawati gave birth to a son in Bhrigu's race who was devoted to penances and peaceful occupations, viz. — Jamadagni of regulated vows. Kushika's son Gadhi begot a son named Vishwamitra. Possessed of every attribute of a Brahmana, that son though a Kshatriya by birth was equal to a Brahmana. Richika (thus) begot Jamadagni, that sea of penances. Jamadagni begot a son of dreadful deeds. The foremost of men, that son mastered all the sciences, including that of arms. Like a burning fire, that son was Rama, the extirminator of the Kshatriyas. Having satisfied Mahadeva on the Mountains of Gandhamadana, he begged from that deity for weapons, especially the axe of fierce power in his hands. For that peerless axe of fiery splendour and irresistible sharpness, he became unequalled on Earth. Meanwhile the powerful son of Kritavirjya, the king of the Haihayas, endued with great power, highly pious, and possessed of a thousand arms through the favour of (the great Rishi) Dattatreya, having conquered in battle, by the strength of his own arms the entire Earth with her mountains and seven islands, became a very powerful sovereign and (at last) gave away the Earth to the Brahmanas in a horse sacrifice.

"The powerful Arjuna, however, of great prowess, always devoted to peace, ever obedient to Brahmanas and ready to protect all classes, and charitable and brave, O Bharata, did not think of that curse imprecated on him by that great Rishi. His powerful sons, always proud and cruel, on account of that curse, became the indirect cause of his death. The princes, O foremost of Bharata's race, caught and brought away the calf of Jamadagni's Homa cow, against the knowledge of Kartavirjya, the king of the Haihayas. For this reason a dispute took place between the great Jamadagni and the Haihayas. The powerful Rama, the son of Jamadagni, filled with anger, cut off the arms of Arjuna and brought back, O king, his father's calf which was grazing within the inner apartments of the king's mansion. Then the foolish sons of Arjuna, going in a body to the hermitage of the great Jamadagni, cut with their lances, O King, the head of that Rishi from off his trunk while the celebrated Rama had gone out for fetching sacred fuel and grass. Worked up with anger at the death of his father and filled with vengeance, Rama vowed to rid the Earth of Kshatriyas and took up arms. Then that foremost of the Bhrigus, endued with great energy, displaying his prowess, quickly killed all the sons and grandsons of Kartavirjya. Killing thousands of Haihayas in anger, the descendant of Bhrigu, O king, covered the Earth with blood. Highly energetic, he speedily freed the Earth of all Kshatriyas. Filled then with pity, he retired into the woods.

"Afterwards, after the expiry of some thousands of years, the powerful Rama, who was angry by nature, was accused of cowardice. The grandson of Vishwamitra and son of Raivya possessed of great ascetic merit, named Parvasu, O king, began to accuse Rama publicly, saying, — 'O Rama, were not those pious men, viz., Prataardhana and others, who were assembled at a sacrifice at the time of Yayati's death Kshatriyas by birth? You are not truthful, O Rama! You simply brag before people. For fear of Kshatriya heroes you have betaken yourself to the mountains.' Hearing



these works of Parvashu the descendant of Bhṛigu once more took up arms and once more covered the Earth with hundreds of Kshatriya ladies. Those Kshatriyas, however, O king counting by hundreds, that were not killed by Rāma, multiplied (in time) and became powerful monarchs on Earth. Rāma once more killed them quickly, not sparing even the very children, O king. The Earth again was covered with the bodies of Kshatriya children of premature birth. As soon as Kshatriya children were born Rāma killed them. Some Kshatriya ladies, however, succeeded in hiding their children from Rāma.

"Then Sudas and Vashyās began wilfully to defile the wives of Brahmanas. When anarchy began on Earth the weak are oppressed by the strong and no man is master of his own possessions. Unprotected duly by the virtuous Kshatriyas, and oppressed by the wicked for that disorder, the Earth quickly sank to the lowest depths. Seeing the Earth sinking from fear the great Kasyapa held her on his lap, and because the great Ashi held her on his lap (uru) therefore is the Earth known by the name of Uru. The godless Earth, for securing protection, pleased Kasyapa and begged of him a king. The Earth said 'There are, O Rishi, some hiding Kshatriyas concealed by me among women. They were born in the family of the Mahavyas. Let them, O sage, protect me. There is another person of Puru's family, viz., Viduratha's son, O powerful one, who has been brought up among bears in the Kishkinyā mountains. Another, viz., the son of Sudas has been protected through pity by the highly energetic Parashara ever engaged in sacrifices. Though born in the family of a twice born one, yet like a Shūdra he does everything for that Ashi and has therefore been named servant of all work. Shiva's energetic son Gopati has been brought up in the forest among kine. Let him, O sage protect me. Pratrādhanas highly powerful son named Vatsa has been brought up among calves in a cow pen. Let that Kshatriya protect me. Dadhivahana's grandson and Diviratha's son was kept hidden on the banks of Ganga by the sage Gautama. His name is Vrihadratha. Possessed of great energy and endued with numerous accomplishments, that blessed prince has been protected by wolves and the mountains of Griddhrakuta. Many Kshatriyas of the race of Marutta have been protected. Equally energetic like the lord of Maruts, they have been brought up by the Ocean. These children of the Kshatriyas have been heard of as housing in different places. They are residing with artificers and goldsmiths. If they protect me I shall then remain unmoved. Their fathers and grandfathers have been killed for my sake by the highly powerful Rāma. It is my duty, O great sage, to see that their funeral rites are properly performed. I do not desire that I should be protected by my pre-ent kings. Do you, O sage, quickly make such arrangements that I may remain (as before).

"Vasudeva said,—Then, finding out those energetic Kshatriyas whom the goddess had named, the sage Kasyapa installed them duly as kings. Those Kshatriya races that are now in existence are the offsprings of those princes."

The story of Aurva proves how Kshatriya tradition becomes a Brahmanical fable in the Poulama Parva of the Mahabharata. The learned Pargiter has said so in his book and made full references to it. "Aurva might be treated as meaning 'born from the thigh' (Uru) and also belonging to the earth (Uru). These names and ideas developed a fable"†. He dealt with the Bhārgavas in a separate chapter and clearly

\*Professor M. N. Dutt's Mahabharata (English Translation) Shanti Parva, Chapter L, pages 67—70, Slokas 3, 6-7, 29—37 44—61 and 68—85

†Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition" page 68

found out that Jamadagni lived on the Ganges bank\* and fled from fear of the Haihayas and allied himself by marriage with a junior royal family of the kings of Oudh. His son was the famous Parasurama who killed his mother Renuka and waged war against the Kshatriya race. His account of the incident is as follows —

"The Bhrigus or Bhargavas were priests to king Krtavirya (of the Haihayas) and he bestowed great wealth on them. After his death the princes of his family demanded it back, but the Bhargavas refused to give it up. They used violence to the Bhargavas, and the Bhargavas fled to other countries for safety. One of the Bhargava wives gave birth to a son then who was called Aurva. The other account says (Mbh xiii, 56, 2905-7) in prophetic form—The Kshatriyas fell out with the Bhargavas and slew them, and Bhargava Urva (Urva is also mentioned, Hr 46, 2527 pad v, 38,74) was born then. His son was Reika. "These Aurvas lived in Madhyadesa, where they had fled and married, (Jamadagni lived on the Ganges bank, pad vi, 268,21 Bdim, 26, 4 -3, 45, 1-5 say on the R. Narmada, a late Brahmanical tale probably,) and the Haihaya king Arjuna Kartavirya is said in his conquests there to have molested Jamadagni. There was hostility, and Arjuna's sons killed Jamadagni. Rama in revenge killed Arjuna and also, it is said, many Haihayas. The Haihayas pursued their devastating raids through N. India, until Sagara annihilated their power. The Brahmans confused all these occurrences in the fable that Rama destroyed all Kshatriyas off the earth twenty one times. Consequently he is often styled the exterminator of the Kshatriyas. But tradition, while apparently accepting that fable, redressed the honour of the Kshatriyas by two anachronistic fables, that Rama challenged Rama of Ayodhya to fight and was defeated, and that he had a long contest with Bhishma also and was worsted. It is fabled that Rama, after exterminating the Kshatriyas, sacrificed at Rama tirtha with Kasyapa as his Upadhyaya and gave him the earth (or a golden altar) as his fee whereupon Kasyapa banished him to the southern ocean, and the ocean made the Surparaka country (near Bombay) for Rama, and Rama dwelt there. Other stories say Rama retired then to Mt Mahendra, which is generally identified with the Mahendra range in Orissa and he is fabled to have lived on there till long ages later. He is also fictitiously introduced into tales about later princes. The next Bhargava Rishi mentioned is the Aurva, who succoured Sagara of Ayodhya and whose name was Agni. He is the last Aurva alluded to"†

It is apparent that the Brahmanas did not like to mention fully the disgraceful acts so well-known except by a mere reference under a garbled allusion. There are no less than 18 Bhargava hymn makers mentioned as Venyu Pithi in Rig Veda x 148 5 and amongst them appear the names of Saunaka and Srtotisena. The Uttarakanda Ramayana mentions Pracetasu Bhargava (93 and 99 cantos, 16118 verses 25). The learned Pargiter says that

"the Ramayana is highly Brahmanical and its stories fanciful and absurd."‡

He is of opinion that

"Vedic literature is not authoritative in historical matters (except where it notices contemporary matters), and conclusions drawn from it are not criteria for

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\*Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 197

† Do do do do pages 197-200

‡ Do do do do page 71

estimating the results yielded by historical tradition in the Epics and Puranas. These results must be judged independently on their own merits." "The epic" he says "itself implies that the Purana preceded it. It says that Vyasa, just after he had composed it, declared that he had already made the Itihāsa and Puranas manifest."

The genius of Vyasa and Valmiki, the great descendants of the two great sages Vasistha and Bhṛigu, first conceived the idea of Epic literature—it was not a comment on the ancient literature but altogether a new thing of its kind. Life was then found to consist of some progressive stages of growth and usefulness like the annual seasons. As regards the human race, it was found convenient to use the analogous series of changes and states that take place one after the other, viz., growth, maturity and death, in such a way as would excite gratitude and admiration at the kindness of the great Creator in creating the human, animal, insect and plant kingdoms on a plan of such wise mutual co-operation, relation of male and females, friendship and unselfish love and devotion. This was found to be the real basis of the true religion in going into the all important question of creation and the Creator of the universe with which the Vedic, Upanishadic, philosophic and moral ages of India were concerned.

Laws were found necessary for all kings, priests, sages, princes, and the general public, male and female. The time of nursing, tutelage, discipline, restraint and practice has been graduated in the scale of human existence as imperative duties. The Indian Epics present the two opposite sides of the true picture of life in human society, showing the influences which cluster round the years of childhood and youth, attracting some to religion and piety and some to lust and dissipation. There is no other example of the stages of life more appealing than those of endurance of gratuitous suffering which might have been spared because such suffering paints before the world in graphic colours the wanton and wicked addition to the sum total of human misery due to mere want of feeling in others, their obduracy, vanity, stupidity, cupidity, malice and caprice. God and Satan are painted in the contending heroes of the Indian Epics. They are demi gods of Avatars, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa is something higher and nobler than all these.

The inspired writers seem to have been particularly fond of him, representing as he does the purity of Divine Love in contrast with the interested love of a husband and wife. The salutary and enlivening effects of light and shade upon heavenly and earthly love in the visible

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\* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 14

† *Adi Mahabharata*, I, 54—64. Cf. viii, 34, 1493, page 22

creation contribute in a large measure to a lively illustration of the infinite goodness, knowledge and power of God. His eye penetrates through all the secret recesses of the human heart and nature and examines the motive of every action of a man or a woman. Such pictures of opposite examples of restraint and indulgence are bound to operate upon the stage of the world in making one watchful over the effects of the thoughts and considerations of one's heart upon another.

Light and darkness are questions of Day and Night, but to a blind man day and night make no difference. He cannot see the glories of the universe, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the beauties of Nature and creation. What light is in mundane existence, love is in the spiritual domain. The majestic and marvellous light of love is reflected in Sri Krishna, before whose splendour all created luminaries of Ancient India were lost in the great field of the religious battle of Kurukshetra. The father of the Kurus, Dhritarastra, who is said to be blind with selfish love and ambition of making his sons regale themselves in wealth and enjoyment, is lost in misery and agony of grief and Yudhishthira survived the frail body. Neither the shadow of death nor the gloom of the grave could overtake it. He is installed on the throne of truth with visions of eternity.

Other heroes of the great Epic pale into insignificance before the great ideal Yudhishthira. The Avatars of Pouranic gods disappear before the universal love of Sri Krishna, the essence of heavenly sanctity. The world is not so much concerned with the material body of God Sri Krishna or in questions of flesh and blood as in the nature of heavenly love. Questions of morality cannot arise in the matter of spiritual discussions. A man whose understanding has been regularly trained and exercised in the art of thinking will be able to employ his natural powers more properly than he could otherwise have done. The mind, like the body, requires to be trained before it can use its powers quickly, easily and advantageously. Logic is the art of thinking well. Nothing in this great creation can impress the mind so much as the miracles of wisdom and its excellence. Many are proud of their person, dress, power or fame. They study nothing but appearance. But religion alone will teach the principles, manners and means of shining in the world.

Man is a creature of circumstance and every literature is a necessity as it too is a creature of circumstance. Indian Epic literature was essentially so and was the product of necessity. After the extirpation of the Kshatriyas (kings) who fled in all directions and went into hiding to avert destruction by Parasurama, they were nowhere to be found and society and the country were fast approaching chaos and

anarchy for want of the Kshatriya kings, who by prowess and sternness had hitherto served as the cementing material to keep the various warring elements of society in concord and to promote the peace and prosperity of the country. Deprived of the protection and patronage of the kings, religion too was on the wane and the Brahmana came to be discredited. To re-cue the country and society from such a sad predicament it became necessary to regenerate the Kshatriyas and to increase their numerical strength. But the Kshatriyas were dead and only a very few of them were lying concealed here and there. To shoot life into the dry bones of the Kshatriya race and to regenerate and reorganize society, the idea of the Epics was conceived. Vyasa's raising one hundred Kshatriya sons for Gandhari by his word of blessing and his raising the Kshatriya kings Pandu, Dhritarashtra and Vidura by procreation are perhaps nothing but allegorical for the raising and regeneration of the Kshatriya race by his Epic, the Mahabharata.

The object of the Epics was to infuse life into society and the country by holding up to them glorious examples of kings, priests and people of the past and thereby urging their imitation. The Epics further strove to encourage the Kshatriya kings by showing up the new race of Kshatriyas as more virile and heroic than its predecessors, as is clear from the story of the conqueror Rama's defeat at the hands of his sons, Lava and Kusha, and that of conqueror Arjuna's defeat at the hands of his son, Babrubahana. The Indian Epics describe the rearing up of Kshatriya princes in the hermitages of ancient sages. Valmiki, the great author of the Ramayana, was said to have sheltered and reared Lava and Kusha and the great Epic speaks of Drupada and Drona being similarly brought up. Drupada's close friendship with Drona and their subsequent rupture may be said to be the root of all troubles in the great Epic.

"Friends, once they fall out, become the bitterest enemies" (Shakespeare). Their early friendship was turned into enmity, which was the cause of the Great War. The fight between them and Drupada's defeat and division of the Panchala kingdom made Drupada think of revenge and recovery of his lost kingdom. The sacrifice performed for the purpose blessed king Drupada with two sons, Drishtadyumna and Sikhandi, and a daughter, Draupadi. They were the real destroyers of the Kuru families, and their friends and allies were their great commanders-in-chief, and warriors, Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Salva in the famous field of Kurukshetra.

There is a very great similarity in the conception and aim of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, viz., vice may rise for a time but

ultimate success crowns the head of virtue. This gave rise to the special name of 'Jaya' for the Indian Epics as distinct from Purana, and the very first invocation verse alludes to it. The inspiration of poets of Ancient India eclipsed the authors of the Vedic hymns, Upanishads, Brahmanas, Sutas, Puranas, and institutes of the Hindus. Indian tradition connects the king of Indian poets and dramatists, Kalidasa, with inspiration and blessings from the goddess of learning, Saraswati.

"Bhisma said —Pleased with their penances and adoration, Narayana ordered the goddess of speech, viz., Saraswati, to enter into the bodies of those Rishis. The goddess, for the behoof of the worlds, did what she was ordered. On account of the entrance of the goddess of speech into their bodies, those Rishis, well conversant with penances, succeeded in composing that foremost of works in respect of words, sense and reason. Having composed that work sanctified with the syllable OM, the Rishis first of all read it to Narayana, who heard them from kindness \*"

The Epic invocation verse mentions her name beginning with the 'OM'. Sri Krishna is said to have been the first introducer of the worship of the goddess Saraswati in the Puranas. Not only Vyasa and Valmiki drew their inspirations from her but their preceptors also did the same, as the great Epic distinctly mentions. The great reviser of the great Epic, Yajnavalkya, revised the works of Vyasa and Vaisampayana and mentioned the name of Saraswati, the fountain of knowledge and instruction.

The chief object of the Epics has been to recite in graphic manner the majestic glory of power and energy reflected in the thousand hands of Kartavirya-arjuna or the hydra-headed Ravana crushed to pieces by the power of virtue represented in the forlorn men and beasts like Parasurama, Rama Sugriva and Hanumana. The Purana theory of God's appearance in fish, tortoise, boar and dwarf was improved upon in the Epics. What Rama failed to achieve, Sri Krishna did conspicuously. It is for this that the Ramayana stands as it was whereas the Mahabharata has gone on increasing from time to time.

The Ramayana is not, strictly speaking, an Epic from the Hindu point of view. The first six books are distinctly called a poem describing the tragic death of Ravana and Book VII, known as Uttarakanda, is more in the nature of a Purana dealing with the Deva and Asura fight and forecasting what would happen in the future. The Indian Epics give greater prominence to the enemies of humanity to show the still greater power of virtue, which vanquished them eventually. Meagre beasts like the boar, tortoise, man-lion and dwarf killed powerful demons like Hiranakshya and Hiranyakasipu, humiliated the powerful Bali, and the Bharata Samhita likewise testifies to the powers of Agastya, Vasistha, and Bhrgu, in subduing and killing

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\*The Mahabharata Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXXVI, verses 35-37, page 537

Batapi and Ilkai, Britta and Kalkey is and the beautiful Tillottama in the case of Sundar and Upasundar. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata did the same thing beautifully in the real poetry of actual life and society, declaring to the world that ultimate success in life depends more upon virtuous intention and action than on the power of body and flesh, the quantity and quality of powerful combinations. Sri Krishna is identified and hall-marked with success in the great Epic even in the mouths of Karna and Sanjaya, whereas the great Rama was not so in the Ramayana. There lies the difference between the two great literatures of the advanced and cultured people of India.

Both Vyasa and Valmiki describe the continual fight of the senses in the internal body of men and the outside world. The very first inspiration verse of Valmiki speaks of it. Time is the great hunter of the creative passion of the animal kingdom and Valmiki warns the world of fleeting time, the destroyer of the life of enjoyments and passion, vanity and pomp. Rama was the great hunter who killed the great Ravana, steeped in sensual enjoyment, who was trying to enjoy the beautiful Sita and was killed in the attempt in the midst of grandeur and opulence. Besides, the ancient cruel passion for hunting was denounced in due manner in both the Epics in Dasaratha's and Pandu's deaths by curses.

It is strange that Western scholars like Professor Macdonell have indulged in an erroneous view that Dasaratha was poisoned by his wife Kaikeyi. It is a great pity that he failed to see the object of the author. Dasaratha and Pandu were victims of carnal appetite and had more than one wife. Kaikeyi and Kousalya, Kunti and Madri were mentioned to depict the two aspects of the passion of love in the material world. Kaikeyi and Madri were for pleasure, enjoyment and ambition of life, whereas Kousalya and Kunti were for peace and maintenance of the glory of their husbands. Dasaratha was placed on the horns of a dilemma. He had promised two boons to his wife Kaikeyi for saving his life in a battle and Kaikeyi had reserved to the future the naming of the boons. When Dasaratha declared that Rama would be installed king, Kaikeyi asked for the boons, that her son Bharata should be king and Rama should be exiled.

The boons asked for by Kaikeyi standing in the way of the fulfilment of the king's declaration at the last moment, and Dasaratha being unable to bear the catastrophe of granting the said boons, the two dutiful sons Rama and Bharata saved their father from moral and spiritual obligations to his wife and son. Rama went into exile to fulfil the pledge of his father and Bharata refused to sit on the throne and offered the kingdom to Rama, going to him personally, and on

Rama refusing it, took Rama's permission to place his sandals on the throne fallen vacant by the death of their father Dasaratha and to reign as Rama's regent. The two dutiful sons saved their father by fulfilling his promise, by making Rama the king by proxy, and Dasaratha's extracted promise of making Bharata king in his actual reigning as a regent and thus led him to heaven by their piety and devotion

" High fate is his, the sire of two  
Most virtuous sons, so brave and true  
With wonder and with joy intense  
Our ears have heard their conference  
•        •        •        •

' The moon his beauty may forgo,  
The cold forsake the hills of snow,  
And Ocean o'er his banks may sweep  
But I my father's word will keep  
Now, whether love of thee or greed  
Thy mother led to plan the deed  
Worth from thy breast the memory throw,  
And shal' love and reverence show '  
Thus spake Kausalya's son again  
Bharat replied in humble strain  
To him who matched the sun in might  
And lovely as the young moon's light  
'Put, noble brother, I entreat  
These sandals on thy blessed foot  
These, lord of men, with gold bedecked,  
The realm and people will protect  
Then Rama, as his brother prayed  
Beneath his feet the sandals laid,  
And these with fond affection gave  
To Bharata's hand, the good and brave  
Then Bharat bowed his reverent head  
And thus again to Rama said :  
' Through fourteen seasons will I wear  
The hermit's dress and matted hair  
With fruit and roots my life sustain,  
And still beyond the realm remain,  
Longing for thee to come again  
The rule and all affairs of state  
I to these shoes will delegate  
And if, O tamer of thy foes,  
When fourteen years have reached their close '"\*

To a dramatist it is worthwhile to sacrifice such a life of enjoyment which made such a dutiful son as Rama go into exile for his indiscretion. Rama abstained from taking any help from his father's kingdom or from any human being in his great war against Ravana,

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\* Professor Ralph T H Griffith's 'The Ramayan of Valmiki' translated into English verse Canto CXII, pages 221-222 Book II



beyond utilising the powerful apes and monkeys of the forest as instruments and accessories of war, lest it might be construed as participating in the kingdom of his father or exercising his influence as an heir-apparent to the throne of the powerful suzerainty of Ayodhya.

The great Epic allots the penalty of senility to Yayati, fall to Nahusa and Mahavira and that of death to Pandu and Parikshit for the cruel passion of hunting and the animal passion of marrying more than one wife. Nahusa and Mahavira were punished for the criminal offence of casting wistful eyes on others' wives. The king Parikshit was saved in the womb of his mother to die in his hunting expedition by the curse of the son of a mute sage engaged in religious austerities for his injudicious action in placing a dead serpent on the mute sage's neck out of vanity. It was an age when the vanity of Asvathama and Parikshit was crushed. Vanity was denounced from the days of Yayati and the great Epic says that his fall from Heaven was ascribed to it. He was saved by his four grandsons by his daughter Madhavi\*. One can realise the divine love of the Almighty Father, if one is blessed with children. It is for this the ancient sages of renunciation found out their mistakes and declared that the gate of heaven is opened by the children, and a son's name *Putra* is derived therefrom in the Sanskrit language. Domestic life is good. The great Epic author Vyasa advised Yudhishthira to reign instead of to retire.

"Vyasa said:—'The words of Arjuna, O amiable Yudhishthira, are true. The highest religion as sanctioned by the Scriptures consists in the duties of a householder. You are acquainted with all duties. Do you then duly practise the duties prescribed for you (viz., the duties of a householder). A life of retirement in the forest forgetting the duties of a householder has not been laid down for you. The gods, Patris, ghosts and sorrents all depend (for their maintenance) upon a householder. Do you then support all these, O king. Birds and animals and various other creatures, O king are supported by householders. He, therefore, who belongs to that mode of life, is superior to all. The life of a householder is the most difficult of all the four modes of life. Do you practice that mode of life then, O Partha, which is difficult of being practised by persons of uncontrolled senses. You have mastered all the Vedas. You have earned great ascetic merit. You should, therefore, bear like an ox the burden of your ancestral kingdom. Penances, sacrifices, forgiveness, learning, mendicancy, restraint of senses, contemplation, living in solitude, contentment, and knowledge of Brahma, should, O king, be practised by Brahmanas to the best of their ability for the attainment of success.

I shall now tell you the duties of Kshatriyas. They are not unknown to you. Sacrifice, learning activity, ambition holding the rod of chastisement, dreadfulness, protection of subjects, knowledge of the Vedas, practice of all kinds of penances, good conduct, acquisition of wealth, and gifts to deserving persons, these, O king, when performed properly by the Kshatriyas, secure for them both this world and the next, as heard by us. Of them, O son of Kunti, wielding the rod of chastisement has been declared to be the foremost. A Kshatriya must

\* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter XC

always have strength, and upon strength depends chastisement. Those I have mentioned are, O king, the principle duties for Kshatriyas and lead greatly to their success. Brihaspati, in this matter, sang this verse — Like a snake devouring a mouse, the earth devours a king who is inclined to peace and a Brahmana who is greatly addicted to a life of domesticity. It is heard again that the royal sage Sudharma, only by wielding the rod of chastisement, gained the highest success, like Daksha himself, the son of Prachetas \*\*

The great Epic's chief aim has been to regenerate the two important sections of the Indo-Aryan community, the kings and priests, fighting for vanity and power. Domestic life is the royal road to heaven. Yajati, the great Epic king, enlightened his grandsons about the seven gates of heaven, which were Asceticism, Modesty, Simplicity, Kindness, Peace of mind, Self-control and Gifts †. King Sibi, son of Ushunara, was the most famous amongst kings for his wonderful hospitality and gifts and was the foremost of the four grandsons of Yajati ‡. The great Epic describes the bounden duties of a house-holder, a king, a priest of India and their mutual relationship, as well as the duties of parents and their children, and husband and wife. Without domestic life the control of the senses by abstraction of mind in silence was not found very effective. The peace and prosperity of an empire depends on the good feeling between a king and his priest and the discourse between Aila Pururaba, the Nestor of Indian kings, and Kasyapa, the father of the priesthood in India, speaks for itself.

"Kasyapa said — For a division between Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, numberless griefs assail the people. Knowing this, a king should appoint a (Brahmana) priest having experience and wide knowledge. The Brahmana contributes to the advancement of the Kshatriya, and the Kshatriya to that of the Brahmana. Brahmana should, therefore, be especially and always adored by kings §.

"Bhisma said — It is said that the preservation and advancement of the kingdom depend upon the king. The preservation and advancement of the king depend upon the king's priest. That kingdom truly enjoys felicity where the invisible fears of the subjects are removed by the Brahmana and all visible ones are suppressed by the king with the strength of his arm ¶.

Kasyapa's greatest service in the cause of humanity was his curbing of the powers of Parasurama, which entitled him to the priesthood of the Bharata kings of the Kshatriya race. A descendant of Kasyapa was said to have been run over by the car of a wealthy Vaisya and the latter was not punished by the king Indra. Indra in the guise of a jackal read him the great lecture on the vanity of Brahmins like him as follows —

"Bhisma said — They who are born under an auspicious constellation on an auspicious lunation and at an auspicious hour, try their best for performing sacrifices,

\* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter XXIII, verses 2—15, pages 26-27

† Adi Parva, Chapter XC, verse 22.

‡ Adi Parva, Chapter XCIII,

§ Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXIII, verses 23 and 32, page 110

¶ The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXIV, verses 1 and 2, page 110

practising charity, and procreating children, and wishing to pass their time cheerfully in the acts, at last acquire very great happiness. They, on the other hand, who are born under evil stars, inauspicious lunations and at evil hours, cannot perform sacrifices and get progeny and at last fall into the Asura order. In my previous birth I had much useless learning. I always tried to find out reasons and had very little faith. I used to censure the Vedas. I was unacquainted with the fourfold objects of life, and was devoted to the science of reasoning which is based upon ocular or tangible proofs. I used to speak of reasons only. Indeed in assemblies I always spoke of reasons. I used to speak irreverently of the injunctions of the Śruti and address Brahmanas haughtily. I was an atheist, a sceptic, and though really ignorant proud of my learning. This birth of a jackal that I have got in this life is the outcome. O twice born one of those sins of mine.

"Thus addressed the ascetic Kaśyapa rising up, said — O, you are surely endued with great knowledge and intelligence. I really wonder at all this. With eye whose vision was extended by knowledge, the Brahmana then saw that being who had addressed him as Indra, the king of the gods and the lord of Shachi."

It also speaks of the great power and prosperity of the Vaisyas (Shānti Parva, Chapter 180) in ancient India.

Hospitality, from the days of ancient Indo-Aryan civilisation, was considered to be the highest virtue, and the idea of expiation of sins by sacrifice and gifts was in vogue from post-Vedic days. The births of the great prince Bhārata, son of Śakuntala and Dushmanta, Vyasa and Karna are said to be the fruits of the principles of hospitality pushed to the extreme. The legend of Karna being the half-brother of the Pandavas might have originated from the fact that the mother of Karna and that of the Pandavas were perhaps two different bodies bearing the same name, viz., Kuntī, which may be responsible for the dramatic interpolation. It served the purpose of a Sūtra dramatist to utilise the name to make Kuntī mother of the Pandavas as well as of Karna.

In the story of Sudarsana and his wife Oghabati in the Annusasana Parva it is clearly held that hospitality is the gate of heaven, more than chastity as it is now understood. The gift of Madhavi to Galaba by her father Yajati bears this out. The birth of Vyasa is ascribed to such over-stretched sense of hospitality and the birth of Suta Karna might be so with his mother Kuntī, a different Kuntī to the mother of the Pandavas. It is said Vena's death was another epoch-making event. Prithu was raised by the Brahmanas and from Prithu Sutas, Maghadas and Nishadas were born. They were all connected with the Epic. The inspiration verse of Vālmiki and the story of the king Uparichara begin with the humane idea of religion of non cruelty in the religion of sacrifice. The abandonment of the snake sacrifice of Parikshit, the Rakshas sacrifice of Parasara, marks the distinct age of mercy and charity to enemies as a requisite virtue of an ancient king.

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\* The Mahabharata, Shānti Parva, Chapter CLXXX, verses 45—49 and 52-53, pages 271-272

The incumbent duties of a house-holder were defined in the five sacrifices of daily life, of religion and social service. The story of Uddalaka says that even a wife if she was not in menses had to satisfy a guest with her person. Her husband could not object to it and king Sadasana, by virtue of such hospitality, went to Heaven in person, but his wife was represented as being turned into a river for her objections to it on the earth below. Madhavi refused to marry after giving birth to four distinguished men of India and it was hospitality to a pigeon which induced king Sibi to give the flesh of his own body to Virtue, which appeared before him in the guise of a hawk or falcon. Shakespeare says —

" My master is of churlish disposition  
And little reck's to find the way to Heaven  
By doing deeds of hospitality " "As You Like It "  
Act II, Scene IV )  
" In former ages courteous ladies were  
Who worshipp'd virtue, and not worldly gear "

Gandhari, Kunti and Draupadi presented the maternal, moral and spiritual aspects of the great question of union between Woman (Prakriti) and Man (Purusha) with which the creation of the human world is so closely concerned.

It could never have been the aim of the Epic to uphold conflict for the possession of the earth, power, person, caste, custom, law, rule and religion, which cannot but be selfish. It was a drama acted before the watching universe on a stage not bounded by the high mountain ranges of the Vindhya or Himalayas. It was a conflict not decided by the strategy, strength and learning of Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna or Arjuna, Satyaki, Bhishmadyumna, but by the piety of Yudisthira and Draupadi, praying in the midst of their great sorrow and calumny, torn from the heart of their kingdom in the deceitful play of a game of dice, scorned by the silent countenances of their own near and dear relatives and looking upon Heaven in the supreme embodiment of wretchedness in the forlorn forests. They suffered the shame and humiliation of an exiled emperor and disgraced empress. They gave ample proofs of endurance, of what human brain, blood, bone and flesh were capable of bearing, and with unmistakable clarity they defined their positions as a man and a woman in the creation of God that love was the be-all and end-all of the existence of the soul within and the soul without and that was represented in their faithful ally, guide and relation, Sri Krishna, whose real force was reflected in the heroism of Arjuna and the strength of Bhima to kill the enemies of flesh and blood to which human frailty was heir. That was the real civilisation of the soul and love of which India was so proud.

The great author of the Mahabharata depicts the history of civilisation, not of the body and clothes but of the soul and heart, and it is therefore only just that those who want to hide their sin like to expose others by making them nude. But they failed utterly in their attempt to do so. They were themselves ridiculed. There is a proverb that those who commit a misdeed in the open road have no shame, but those who witness it feel ashamed and cover their eyes. It is of that nature. Drunkards beat and abuse the men who try to help them out of the drain. The reformers were abused with all sorts of things and they are even described as being of low birth and origin. The great men are not fairly treated for their discovery of the truth. It is the way of the world, the work of illusion.

Men in those days believed that those who died to free the country and the nation from the tyrant's hand went to Heaven, so they died contented as they sacrificed their lives for the love and liberty of their motherland. Ancient Indians regarded mother and motherland above everything and they looked upon them as higher than even Heaven itself. The great Epic Mahabharata has said so times out of number. It has passed into a proverb that they would on no account leave their motherland but would rather gladly give up their own lives for it. This intensified the hatred and made the fight bitter, cruel and bloody. It was for this reason that the war descriptions in the Epic were so extensive. Besides, in the heroic age people liked to be imbued with martial spirit by reading the heroic exploits of heroes on the fields of war.

The different Parvas of war accounts grew to such an enormous size, containing within their scope the kernel of the Epic, that each particular country interested in the exploits of its own hero only read the Parva connected with him and they were interested only in it. Each of these war parts, amplified in time, became a miniature Mahabharata in itself, and thus the Mahabharata grew to such a tremendous size. These war parts were full of exaggerations and were of very late origin and naturally contained contradictory and spurious statements of all kinds to display the glory of the heroes of each province they referred to. There was no check to restrain their authors from departing from the truth. The true account of the war is given in the Asvamedha Parva by Krishna. He was the beau-ideal of godhead at the end and what he told his father about the war could not but be true. If anyone wants to read anything about the ancient civilisation of India he must read the Bharata, Udyoga, Asvamedha and Annusasana Parvas.

There were different customs and manners in different parts of India, but they were all nationalised by matrimonial alliances and conquests, by Rajasuya sacrifices and Dvighbijoya excursions, i.e., testing of the valour of kings and the talents, learning and capacity of princes who succeeded to their fathers' thrones either by bringing to their knees the enemies who had encroached on their forefathers' provinces or by claiming suzerainty over all. This was the aim and ambition of the ancient princes of India which made wars so constant and numerous. The marriage ceremony was performed with a test of strength and valour. It was considered more honourable to snatch a girl away by victory in a fight than to win her by love and courtship. It was thus the source of many lifelong struggles between near and dear relatives. The girls were highly educated and aristocratic. They knew how to drive a war chariot in the field and could fight. The princesses Kakey and Subhadra actually did so and saved the lives of their husbands on the battlefields. Mothers were proud of the heroic deaths of their children. They urged their sons to fight and to recover lost kingdoms or to increase and extend their own dominions. This was the age of the Epic of India.

The original source from which the Indian Epics grew is the Bharata Samhita. It is stated in the Mahabharata that the famous sage Agastya performed a twelve year sacrifice. The Mahabharata aims at the undoing of the animal sacrifice, and it is for this that it is distinctly said that it begins with the episode of the King Basuhoma Uparichara of Magadha, who took up the cause of animal sacrifice and was cursed. He soon became a follower of the new cult of Narayana worship and performed a sacrifice with barley corn and sesamum etc., instead of animals and went to Heaven through the grace of Narayana. Yajnavalkya undid the work of his uncle Vaisampayana. Yajnavalkya was the author of the Satapatha Brahman and White Yajurveda, and the Mahabharata was made on the basis of a fusion between Samkhya and Yoga philosophy. Yajnavalkya was a follower of Patanjala, the author of the Yoga system of philosophy. Yajnavalkya was the high priest of the King of Mithila Janaka, who was found to be the questioner instead of King Janmejaya. Nor is this all. The questions of King Yudhishthira, Arjuna and Dhritarastra were answered by Bhishma, Krishna and Sanjaya, respectively. In all these editions of the Mahabharata the aim cannot be the same.

Materialism has always been an attractive form of philosophy, but the countless evidences of design and purpose strung in different manners round natural phenomena throughout the universe are stronger and brighter proofs against such materialism. The characteristics of the

great Creator are reflected in the changing weather, the seasons, the variety of creations, in the contrast of day and night, life and death, love and enmity. There is a sort of mystery behind the great design. No one is wise at all times. Man learns very little from his own experience but much from that of others. The trinity of the Creator is believed by many religions in the body, soul and spirit of His creation. It is not a question of autocracy in religion or the power of priest, philosopher, or king.

The Indian Epics were not originally concerned with materialism. All other animals live together except man. Man is naturally fond of novelty. Man to assist man is to be a god, this is the path to eternal glory. Mind is the leader and director of mankind, when it aims at glory by a virtuous life, it is sufficiently powerful, efficient and noble. It stands in no need of fortune, since it can neither give nor take away integrity, industry nor other praiseworthy qualities. Personal beauty, great riches and strength of body, or the skill of a great warrior, pass away before the noble productions of mind reflected in Rama and Yudhishthira, in whom the soul and the spirit work together. Neither army nor treasures are the bulwarks of an empire, but in a true friend like Bidur and Sri Krishna, whom one can neither command by force nor purchase with gold but whose help can only be secured by good conduct and faith, lies success in the battle of life.

It is sheer folly to hope for safety in the forlorn island of Ceylon or in the abyss of Dvāpīyina lake, for one cannot avoid the terrors high fortune places within us. Terror closes the ears of the mind when the guilty are overwhelmed at their own acts. The golden palaces and vast empires of Ravana and Duryodhana were burnt and broken, and death and defeat were theirs. Tyrants have given themselves up to mean deceit, false chivalry, mad luxury and boon-giving worship. In battle the greatest cowards are in the greatest danger, for cunning and boldness are their defences. All things in battle turn out well by patient watching, prompt activity on every opportunity and good counsel, with which the God-like Sri Krishna favoured the Pandavas in the great battle.

To effect a speedy end tyrants found friends and mighty soldiers. The Kurus were elated with all sorts of vows of their great generals like Bhishma, Drona and Karna. They found delight in bloodshed. They were all moved by the brave spirit and ready to face death. To die without fear of death is to be desired, but parents could not have prayed for such deaths as that with which Bhishma's father was alleged to have been identified. They would rather pray that their children

should lead upright, honourable lives like the Pandavas. The great Sri Krishna preached the great lesson to the blind king Dhritarastra openly in his great peace mission in the Kuru Court, which summarised reads like this :

The wicked believe that fortune rules in all things. The virtuous and the wicked are equally anxious for glory, honour and command, but the former try to be crowned with success by honourable means while the latter are dependent upon deceitful games and treachery. No one has ever won glory or empire by foul means. Everyone is the artificer of his own fortune. All who deliberate on matters of importance ought to be influenced by feelings of hatred, friendship, anger or compassion. Those who are not known in the world, if they commit anything through any impulse of passion, few can come to know of it, but those who are in an exalted position of life, their deeds are known to all men. It is for this that the liberty of a king depends upon his good name more than upon his riches or the success of his arms. A king is circumscribed and enjoys very little freedom of action. A king has to prefer the good of his country to that of his children. To be able to endure odiums is the first art to be learnt by those who aspire to power, and the Pandavas have given ample proof of this. Nobody becomes guilty by fate. War is waged by a king to give protection to all and especially to the aggrieved party, and not for aggrandising wealth for the luxury of worthless princes like Duryodhana, Dussashana and his friends. He who boasts his descent, praises what belongs to another who went before him long ago. Riches and good birth are not meant to veil the real state of things. Death puts an end to all human ills of life, but thousands die in the battlefield to put a termination to all the ills of mankind.

The wars with which the Indian Epics are concerned were such. They were not mere fights between the Kurus and the Panchalas or the Pandavas for the possession of lost kingdoms. The lower animal depends only on the power of the body, but a true man alone relies not on the frail and fleeting glory derived from riches and power, but from the endowments of mind with which the heroes and heroines of the Indian Epics were endowed. There are ample evidences that the Indian Epics were revised many times, but they have not departed from the original aim materially. The man who can be forced to act against his own will knows not how to die; this alone is what the poet preaches in the deaths of Bhishma and Drona. Gold is tried in the fire and misery tries great men. To bestow a favour hoping to receive another is a contemptible and base usury with which Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma and Drona are found to be identified. A benefit does



not consist in what is done or given, but is seen in the true motive of the donor and doer. He who desires more is really poor and not the man who has little. Other men's sins are before a king's eyes, but his own should not be behind his back. When such is the case that king is blind. A great mind is a great fortune and not material wealth and prosperity.

The kingdom of God is not the gift of another but must be won by culture of head and heart. It was not a question of Vedic sacrifices under different cults and priesthoods, or the boon of Gods, or the development of knowledge under different systems of philosophy, but it was a question of divine love to uplift the moral and spiritual welfare of man or woman as well as that of the general public coming in contact with him or her.

The illustrious examples of Rama and Sita, Yudhishthira and Draupadi, bear testimony to this. The material world is the creation of Maya and with it the births of Maya Sita and Draupadi from one of the five elements of creation are connected. The fire of passion is responsible for the animal creation. The earth receives everyone at birth and Nature supplies all the necessities of life and sustenance. The created beings live, move and die and are converted into the five elements. It is not possible to determine whether nature or mother earth is a kind parent or a hard stepmother of a man or a woman in the vale of tears, but it is true that when he or she discerns the eye of the great Master of the Universe all pain and misery disappear.

Sri Krishna is not an incarnation of any God or virtue but is the great Master of divine love. Sita and Draupadi tried Rama and Yudhishthira with ideal earthly love but could not influence them. The thousands of princesses of India and the loving damsels of Brindaban were enamoured of the divine love of Sri Krishna and the great hero Arjuna was converted to Sri Krishna's creed of love.

This is the great lesson the Indian Epics preach —

“ My mind to me a kingdom is  
Such perfect joy therein I find,  
As far exceeds all earthly bliss  
That God and Nature hath assigned  
Though much I want that most would have  
Yet still my mind forbids to crave ”

## ANCIENT HINDU MARRIAGE SYSTEM.

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In very early times, ordeal was a manner of trial practised in the belief of an actual interposition of God to free the innocent and condemn the guilty 'Waters of Jealousy' mentioned in the Book of Numbers (V. 24) was such a trial and was called the *Judicium Dei*, or judgment of God. This was a sort of trial to test the incontinence of Hebrew girls. It was followed in ancient Greece \* Grotius gives many instances of water ordeal in Bithynia, Sardinia, etc. Fire and water ordeals were found common in Europe in the middle ages and in India as well. The fire ordeal of Sita and water ordeal of Radha are well-known incidents. Marriage is a social as well as a religious ordeal of Ancient India in which man and woman were united by their parents and friends to pass through home-life comfortably, establishing good society and aiding the advance of civilisation. Through Savitri's good conduct her husband Satyaban was brought back to life by the boon of Pluto and her father-in-law got his lost sight and kingdom.

Hindu marriage is a form of union to render social, moral and religious service to humanity. The bond of Hindu marriage was conceived by the ancient sages as a sort of institution where men and women were joined to overcome and refine the earthly dross, sordid desires and human frailties. Students brought up in the hermitages of their preceptors were tried with all sorts of inducements and opportunities. The wives and daughters of the preceptors were actively engaged to try the students before they were allowed to live with them and admitted into the circle called Gotra of their preceptors. The great Epic illustrates this by the examples of Bipul, Utamka, etc. Marriage with the Hindus is not an union to propagate a race but a form of charity, a test of birth, knowledge, accomplishment, truth, fortitude, chivalry, and wisdom. Princess Lopamudra became the wife of Agastya, Devayani, daughter of Sukra, whom Kacha, son of Brihaspati, had refused was found fit for a Kshatriya prince Yajati. Marriage is a question of culture and refinement and not a question of satisfying the urge of nature, companionship, friendship or love.

One of the greatest dramatists of the world, Shakespeare, says —

"But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd  
Than that which, withering on the virgin-thorn,  
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

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\* Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information, page 423

And another —

"Speak it not lightly ! 'tis a holy thing  
 A bond enduring thro' long distant years  
 When joy o'er thine above is hovering  
 Or when thine own is wet with bitterest tears  
 Recorded by an angel a pinions high,  
 And must be questioned in eternity  
 Speak it not lightly though the young and gay  
 Are thronging round thee now with tones of mirth,  
 Let not the holy promise of to-day  
 Fade like the clouds that with the morn have birth  
 But ever bright and sure I may it be  
 Stored in the treasure-cell of memory  
 Life will not prove all sunshine there will come  
 Dark hours for all O, will ye, when the night  
 Of sorrow gathers thickly round your home,  
 Love as ye did when calm and bright  
 Seemed the sure path ye trod, untouched by care,  
 And deemed the future like the present, fair?  
 Should fortune frown on your defenceless head,  
 Should storms overtake your bark on life's dark sea,  
 Fierce tempests rend the sails, gully spread  
 When hope her syren strain sang joyously,  
 Will ye look up though clouds your sky o'ercast,  
 And say, together we will bide the blast?  
 Speak it not lightly 'oh beware, beware'  
 'Tis no vain promise, no unmeaning word,  
 Lo! men and angels list the faith ye swear,  
 And by the High and Holy One 'tis heard  
 O, then kneel humbly at His altar now,  
 And pray for strength to keep the marriage vow"

(From *The Cottager and Artisan*)

Kalidas, the greatest of Indian poets and dramatists, has presented to the world the different aspects and forms of marriage in the examples of Uma, the ideal wife of Siva, Rati of Cupid in the *Kumarsambhava*, Indumati in the *Raghuvamsa* and Sakuntala in the well-known and imitable drama, but Draupadi was the masterpiece of Vyasa in his great Epic which played more upon the Indian imagination than the heroine of Valmiki or Bhababhuti, Sita or any other model hitherto known. The ideal princess Draupadi was said to have been married to five Pandavas, a thing unknown or unheard of in any history or Epic of the world. To realise the extraordinary beauty of such a conception one has to study the growth and development of marriage in the ancient history of civilisation in India. Draupadi's marriage is a question of divine love and emancipation and is not a question of earthly love and marriage.

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\* Professor Henry Southgate's "Noble Thoughts in Noble Language," page 334

The scenes and beauties of Nature have a great and inexplicable charm for the uncultivated primitive man, beasts, birds, etc. The objects of the material world afford food and drink; pleasure and enjoyment are the effects of creation and are the attributes of mind. There is a sort of chord in the human mind which responds to the call of nature in the mystic love of the majestic Creator. It plays upon the heart and appeals to the head about divinity. Here lies the connecting link between love and religion resulting in final emancipation. The sun in the cheerfulness of the morning glow, the stern dazzling beam of noon and mild tenderness of evening sadness, the soothing moon dazzling in the starry firmament; wind and water glistening and flowing with joy, are all messages of animation of their great Creator unknown to the discerning human intelligence. They represent the face of Heaven alone and the gay majestic landscape below of tempestuous ocean, murmuring rivers, still lakes alive with warbling birds, humming bees, roaring beasts on the brim of the lofty mountain peaks, arid deserts, flowery woods, green fields of corn or grass, represent the four or five elements of nature. Natural beauty and divine glory smile upon animal creation.

It is human knowledge, science, philosophy and religion that disclose the hand of the great Creator, the Almighty Father. The great concentration of the Ancient Indian sages blessed them with divine sight to gauge the law, foresight, truth and justice of Heavenly creation. To establish universal love in the society of men by controlling passion, selfishness and envy, the Hindu marriage institution came into being and developed.

The law as it applies to the affections becomes the law of society. The good and the vile seek their respective companions according to different tastes and inclinations. This has always suggested to man the sublime creed that the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will of one Mind and that one Mind is reflected everywhere in the great universe. The Hindu creation believes in five elements and the Samkhya philosophic creation ascribes everything to Prakriti and Purusha. Draupadi is represented as Prakriti and the five Pandavas are the five elements of Purusha. Prakriti is like cold, which is the privation of heat. A man seeks good ends and his strength lies in the whole strength of Nature. Justice, power, love and temperance proceed out of the same spirit of one Purusha differently named as Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeb. The perception of this law of laws in the power of auxiliaries awakens in the mind a sentiment which one can call religion, and makes one's greatest happiness the possession of Nature, Prakriti or Draupadi,

Wonderful is the power to charm and command. The universal love ascending to divinity is represented in the marriage of Draupadi. The red-breasted robin of love sings the sentiments of virtue, the embalmers of the world, to charm and command the Pandavas in their reign of justice and love. It made the sky and hills sublime and the silent song of stars heard in the divine love of Draupadi in the exile life of the Pandavas. All the sweets of domestic life or ideas of the glories of Heaven cannot make one happy unless the heart is cleansed from its pollution in the fountain-head of a heart which is opened for sin and uncleanness. Man ascribes all blame to outward circumstances and his imagination is ever busy in sketching such things as will make him happy, forgetting, thus, that the vessel of the heart is tainted, thus spoiling the vine of earthly comfort. The little head of robin Draupadi was a perpetual spring of joy which outward circumstances could not influence. The notes of the robin salute the Pandavas at every turn. If the weather be bright the bird is on the topmost branch of a tree, and if rain be descending it is under the shade of a leaf, and no change can put a period to its song of comfort.

Draupadi may be described in an adaptation of the well-known lines of the poet Thomson —

" Eyes all the smiling family askance,  
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where she is  
Till more familiar grown, the table crumbs  
Attract her slender feet "

If the pleasures of recreation, though innocent, are forbidden by the maxims of public morality, then they are liable to become poison fountains. Murder will speak from stone walls, the least admixture of a lie will speak for itself. All attempts to make a good impression or favourable appearance generally vitiates the effect. Soul first knows itself the sentiment of virtue in the union of marriage of the soul within and the soul without. This was the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas in the philosophic conception of truth and union of Atma and Paramatma, the secret law of emancipation. The divine love which Draupadi radiated around her and the highly cultured personality that she represented, placed her character on such a high pedestal of fame and public estimation that even the declaration of her marriage with the five Pandavas could not in the least detract from her spiritual and moral loftiness of character or lower her in the least in public estimation. The more lofty a character is, the more it is proof against public or private obloquies.

Sayings and acts, which in the case of ordinary people would evoke ridicule or reproach, were, in the cases of Socrates, Diogenes or Christ,

considered models of wisdom and manliness. Similar was the case with the noble and chaste Draupadī. The fact that the declaration of her having five husbands could not in the least influence public opinion against her, shows how very noble, chaste, moral and highly cultured she was in her time. It is very regrettable and a strange irony of fate that great Western scholars have sought to find in it a handle against her and to ridicule the glorious and reputed ancient Hindu society and civilisation. Western scholars have thought the Mahabharata to be a glorification of the Kurus, and it is in the fitness of things that the profligate Kuru princes and their friends like Karna too found grounds to insult Draupadī publicly for being a consenting party to the political declaration that she was the wife of the five Pandavas when she was really the wife of Yudhishthira alone.

Marriage is the most important relation of life. It is the sanctioned and regulated mode of connection which the innate and instinctive tendencies of human beings desire with the opposite sex. There was no such thing as marriage in the beginning of creation in Hindu mythology. Human creation, it is said, was made by the fiat of the Creator, but when it was found that men so born renounced the world, the Creator thought women necessary for perpetuation of the human race by propagation. Illusion was then represented by woman as an important part of creation. Union between male and female became the essential question of creation, not only in animals but even in plants. In primitive societies there was at first clan life, and when the importance of the female grew, family life came into vogue. Marriage was a later development essential for the regulation of society and decency, the stepping stone of civilisation.

The question of civilisation arises, more or less, with the marriage ceremony. Eventually love became the fruit of marriage. For love without marriage is like a bird of passage which seats itself upon the mast of a ship which itself moves along. Fools gather round a great beauty in a party of Svyambara just like wasps about a fruit girl. Marriage makes the tree of love grow and gives fruit, making its roots deep-seated and allowing birds to build their nests therein and affording shelter to travellers. No joy in nature is so sublimely pure as that of the affectionate mother at the good fortune of her children. In domestic life heavy cares are heaped on the wife, who forgets herself and lives for others. She learns to serve her time to suit her fate. The hours of night are to her the same as those of the day. She learns to govern in the domain which belongs to her in the house. Her love teaches the husband to realise his duty and service to her children.

to make life enjoyable, to make the life of the individual and the life of the community more comfortable. The highest and most important function of marriage is the foundation of human society. It is the basis of all social and educational life, if not partnership of the sexes. It is the only way to give the greatest relief and pleasure to the human race.

Marriage is a religious ceremony of the highest importance, not only to propagate the human race but as having a direct bearing on the place in the next world. Marriage is defined as an act, ceremony or process by which a natural relationship is established. For in course of time word of Heaven appear in children to illumine the unselfish love of the Heavenly Father which is planted in the breasts of earthly parents.

It is evident from Hindu mythology that during the Vedic period the institution of marriage had come to be definitely crystallized.

"In the Rig Veda it is said that Pururava for four years, the two lovers in the Vedic Pururava spend blissful years in pleasure and delight."

Mitra and Varuna in a marvellous manner beget the famous sages Vasistha and Agastya. It is necessary to present a portion of the verse of the Rig Veda bearing on the point, as well as quotations from 'Pancharatra Brahmana' —

"First Soma accepts thee, then Gandharva accepts thee, Agni is thy third lord, the son of man is the fourth to accept thee (40)." "Soma bestowed this maiden to Gandharva. Gandharva gave her to Agni. Agni has given her to me with wealth and progeny (41)." "O bridegroom and bride! Do ye remain here together; do not be separated. Enjoy food of various kinds, remain in your own home, and enjoy happiness in company of your children and grandchildren (42)." "The bride and bridegroom say: May Prajapati bestow on us children, may Arjavan keep us united till old age (Address to the bride) O bride! Inter with auspicious signs to the home of thy husband. Do good to our male servants and our female servants, and to our cattle (43)." "Be thy eyes free from anger, minister to the happiness of thy husband, do good to our cattle. May thy mind be cheerful and may thy beauty be bright. Be the mother of heroic sons and be devoted to the gods. Do good to our male servants and our female servants and to our cattle (44)." "O Indra make this woman fortunate and the mother of worthy sons. Let ten sons be born of her, so that there may be eleven men (in the family) with the husband (45)." "(Address to the bride), May thou have influence over thy father in law and over thy mother-in-law, and be as a queen over thy sister in law and brother in-law (46)." "(The bridegroom and bride say) May all the gods unite our hearts, may Matarisvan and Dhatri and the goddess of speech unite us together (47)." (X 85) Rig Veda."

In the Atharva Veda the marriage sukta of the Rig Veda is found with certain important changes. The gift of the bride rests with her

father. The gift of cows and blankets for securing long life and progeny to the couple was introduced. The consummation mantras are included. The hymns of the Atharva Veda, containing as it does, mostly spells and incantations, appealed to the ignorant and soon became very popular. The incantations, medicines, and injunction of gifts to alleviate the distress and misery of the world must have been appealing to the instincts of the people. Blessings were invoked for the Arya and Sudra equally. The Brahmans were oppressed by the kings (V 19) and the gospel of truth was preached that kings and nations where Brahmanas were oppressed do not prosper (V 9-6); cows were specially prized and gifts of cows were revered and praised over all others (XII 4). The Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were mentioned and Indra was invoked to make them prosperous.

With the growth of society and ideas of convenience, morality and religion, it is surmised that promiscuity naturally came to be regarded with disfavour. Free intercourse before marriage might have been the custom in the pre-Vedic period, but that too came to be considered as reprehensible and must have disappeared. Parasara was said to have asked for the hand of Satyabati but the guardian refused. It is clearly mentioned in the Epic. Besides, it is inconceivable that Vyasa could be guilty of proclaiming to the world the misconduct of his father or mother in the way it is described there, so it cannot but be an interpolation by the enemies of Vyasa.

It might be said with great emphasis that a similar attempt was made by the enemies of the Pandavas and the friends of the Kurus revising the Epic describing the Pandavas and Draupadi as their common wife, which was wholly unorthodox and revolting to the ideas of ancient Hindu civilisation. Proofs are not wanting. The marriage of king Parikshit with the princess of the king of Munduka is mentioned in the Mahabharata in the Bana Parva, Chapter CXCI. This is very interesting, for king Ayusha told his daughter to be faithful and cursed her for her previous misconduct. That seems to be one of the first marriages among the kings of the Solar line. The relevant portion is quoted here below from the translation —

“Markendeya said —A king of Ajodhya, born in Ikshaku's dynasty, named Parikshit, (once) went out hunting. Pursuing a deer alone on a single horse he went away to a great distance (from his followers and retinue). Fatigued and afflicted with hunger and thirst, he saw in that part of the country where he was (thus) led, a dark and dense forest. He entered it (the forest). Seeing in the deep forest a charming lake, he with his horse bathed there. Thus being refreshed and placing some lotus stalks before the horse (for him to eat), he sat on the side of the lake. Lying down there he heard a sweet strain of music



Hearing it he reflected 'I do not see any trace of any human being here whose strain of music is then this?' He then saw a damsel of great beauty and grace gathering flowers and singing (as she was doing it). She soon came near the king. To her he said 'O beautiful lady, who art you and to whom do you belong?' She replied 'I am a maiden. The king said 'I ask you to be mine. To him she replied 'Maiden. Give me a pledge — only then I can be yours. The king asked about the pledge and the maiden said 'I must never see water. The king said 'Be it so' and he then married her. Having married her the king Parikshit sported with her in great joy and sat with her in silence. When he was thus living his soldiers arrived at that spot. Seeing the king the soldiers stood surrounding him. Cheered by the arrival of his soldiers the king entered a palanquin and went to his city. Arriving at his own city he lived with her in privacy. In a those who were stationed near him could never see him. Thereupon his chief ministers asked those women that waited upon him 'What is your business?' The women said — 'We see here a matchlessly beautiful damsel and the king has married her giving her a pledge, namely that he would never show her any water. Having heard all this he (the minister) made an artificial forest containing many trees with numerous fruits and flowers. He excavated a large and deep tank within that forest in one of its corners. He covered it with a net of pearls and its water looked like ambrosia. One day he spoke thus to the king in private. This is a beautiful forest having no water anywhere. Sport here in joy. At these words of the minister he (the king) entered that forest with his beautiful wife. One day when he was sporting in that charming forest he became tired and fatigued and afflicted with hunger and thirst. He then saw a box of Mallharī (nectar) containing with his beloved, the king saw a tank full of water which was transparent and which was as sweet as nectar. Seeing it with his beautiful wife he sat down on its bank. Then the king thus spoke to that lady. Cheerfully bathed in this water. Having heard his words, she got down under the water but she did not reappear again. When the king searched for her he did not find any trace of her. He then ordered the water of the tank to be pumped out. He thereupon saw a frog sitting at the mouth of a hole. On seeing this the king passed the following order in anger. 'Kill all frogs wherever they are to be found. Whoever wishes to see me, let him come to me with a dead frog as tribute.' When this fearful destruction of frogs went on, the frightened frogs went to their king and told him all that had happened. Thereupon the king of the frogs assuming the garb of an ascetic brahmana, came to that monarch and thus spoke to him. 'O king do not allow anger to take possession of you. Be kind you should not destroy the innocent frogs.' Two Slokas here follow — O Undeveloping one, do not destroy the frogs. Pacify your wrath. The prosperity and ascetic merit of those that have their souls steeped in ignorance always suffer diminution. Pledge yourself not to be angry with the frogs. What need have you to commit such a sin? What purpose will be served by killing the frogs?' To him the king whose heart was full of grief for the disappearance of his dear one thus spoke. 'I will never forgive the frogs. I will certainly destroy them. My beloved wife has been devoured by one of those wicked wretches. The frogs therefore will always deserve to be killed by me. O learned man, you shall not intercede on their behalf.' Having heard his words he (the frog king) thus spoke with his senses and mind much pained. 'O king be kind. I am the king of the frogs, named Avusha. She was my daughter, named Sushabhina. This is but an instance of her bad character. She had deceived many other kings before. Then the king said, 'I desire to have her. Let her be given to me by you.' Thereupon her father bestowed her upon him and he spoke to her thus. 'Wait upon this king.' Having said this, he thus cursed his daughter in anger,

"As you have deceived many kings, for your thus untruthful conduct, your sons will be haters of Brahmanas""

It seems significant that the kings and priests did not think well of connections between uncivilised people, like Mundakas, and that connection between civilised royal families and kings of India were found necessary for the advancement of civilisation and peace

It might have been that Parikshit's kingdom of Ajodhya was named from Ayusha, who bestowed his daughter on Parikshit in marriage and was thus instrumental in the propagation of the Ikshaku line of kings of Ajodhya. Earth is called Prithivi from the fact of her first being the wife of (i.e., enjoyed by) King Prithu, a field is named after the person who first clears it of the jungle, and a game belongs to him who wins it first

With the development of society and civic life, marriage became regulated by laws and religious canons. From Vedic times to the times of the Indian Epics eight forms of marriage were in vogue. The Hindu form of marriage has never been a *contra socia*, i.e., a social contract, as in Western countries, but has always been a religious sacrament. The Vedas provided mantras and formulae for solemnizing marriage and the institutes of Manu promulgated the laws and rules regulating marriage. The eight forms of marriage are

"the Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Pais'acha. The six forms (of marriage) commencing with the first one (Brahma) are proper for Brahmanas, the four forms counted from the end (Pais'acha) are not sinful for Kshatriyas, and the same set, excepting that of Rakshasa, shall be regarded as proper for Vaishyas, and Sudras""

The Brahmana form and the Arsha form of marriage have come down to the present time. There was also another kind of marriage, viz., Svayambara marriage, but that was hardly a separate form of marriage. It was only a ceremony and a mode of choosing the bridegroom, the actual marriage which followed the ceremony being held in the Brahmana form.

Under Vedic ordinances, the essential ceremonies for a marriage are firstly, the bestowal of the girl by her parent or guardian on the bridegroom by invocations of the gods and the deities, secondly, the performance of the Yajna with fire in which the Fire-God is made a witness to the bestowal and the gift of the bride, and thirdly, the *Saptapadigaman* (literally, going seven steps), in which the bride goes seven steps following closely and literally at the heels of the bridegroom and this last ceremony completes the marriage and makes it irrevocable. After this *Saptapadigaman*, the girl belongs to the husband and her

\* English Translation of the Mahabharata, Chapter CXCLII, Bana Parva, page 286, verses 3-35

† Manu Samhita, Chapter III, verses 21 and 23, page 84

Marriage amongst the ancient Hindus was an institution of training and perpetual tutelage. The husband took entire charge of the wife—her up bringing, education, training and moulding of character. It was for this that the Shastras enjoined sufficient disparity of age between the husband and the wife. The marriageable age of the girl was enjoined to be between 9 and 11 and that of the husband close upon 30, when he had completed his own education and training and was competent to take up the education of the would-be wife. The wife being of such tender age, and her whole up bringing being in the hands of the husband, her husband became responsible for her training and the results of that training. This was the reason why the Hindu Shastras made the husband responsible for the acts and conduct of the wife and the wife not responsible for either her own or her husband's actions. With the marriage the life of a Hindu began, as it was with marriage that he settled in a household, and the comforts of home life rested solely on the married couple.

In the Svayambara marriage, the state of things was different, for such marriages could take place only in the case of girls who had attained the age of majority, i.e., 16. In these cases the wife was sufficiently educated and cultured to take upon herself the task of selecting the husband and in many cases the office of guiding the husband, as is symbolised by the chariotearing of their husbands by Subhadra and Kaikeyi. In actual warfare the task of the charioteer was more important and onerous than of the fighter or hero. The hero had to fight wherever he found himself confronted with foes, but the charioteer needed the keenness of an expert warrior, prevision and intelligence to discern and select at the right moment the spot where the hero's presence was most needed. It was for this that in the Great War of Kurukshetra none other than the great Sri Krishna, who was foremost in intelligence and political wisdom, could be the charioteer. The Svayambara marriage was confined to Kshatriya princesses only, and the heroines of both the Epics, Sita and Draupadi, were married by Svayambara ceremony.

The Svayambara marriage first originated with the marriage of Savitri, who was asked by her father to select a husband, but as she had made a defective choice, having made it without the knowledge of her father, that form of Svayambara did not continue and in future the Svayambara ceremony had to be held in the presence of the father and a public assembly of kings and distinguished personages so that there might be sufficient safeguards against a wrong or defective choice. And it was for this that at Draupadi's Svayambara the Suta Karna was not allowed to try the prescribed feat of archery, and when Arjuna, an unknown Brahmin urchin, performed the feat and

father or former guardian to have any guardianship or control over her, and when this is done thus complete, the father of the girl has no further right to bestow her on anyone else.

That Drupada's marriage with the five Pandava brothers successively, is a mischievous myth, is abundantly clear from the fact that her marriage with the five Pandava does not belong to any of the eight forms of marriage known in India from the earliest Vedic times, nor could there have been any further bestowal of her by her father on any other Pandava after the completion of her marriage with Yudhishtira. Dharmya, the selected and a pointed priest, officiated in the marriage with Yudhishtira only, the other marriages were only reported with the strange return of the virginity of Drupada after no religious ceremony. There were no rules excluding then sanctioning such marriages. Not that there were free inter-caste marriages, but a Brahman could marry a girl from his own caste as well as from any of the other three inferior castes, so could a Kshatriya and a Vaisya marry girls from their own castes as well as from the castes inferior to them, but generally none could marry a girl from a superior caste. Marriages with girls from inferior castes were known as *Anuloma* marriages.

The Manu Smriti gives the duties of men and women in the 9th Chapter, and quotes Vedas and Nigamas regarding incantations for the expiration of the sin of incest as follows:—

“Inasmuch as my mother fatherlies to her son, used to stroll about in quest of other men (embryoes), may my father purify her womb, delided by her incests with others. This (Mantra of the Veda) serves as an illustration (of what has been said in the preceding couplet) for the expiration of the sin which a woman commits, by contemplating transgressions against her lord, however slight, this Mantra has been enjoined to be employed. As a river in contact with the sea becomes briny, so a woman acquainted with a man and character similar to those of the man who is union with. Though born of the caste, Ashvamedha, united with Vaishtasha and Sarama, wedded to Mandapala, became highly glorified. These and other women of low origin acquired excellent traits of character through contact with the suspicious men that trait of their respective husbands.”

“Then, learned in history, recite a verse on the subject, framed by Vayu, which forbids men to sow their seeds in other men's wives. As an arrow, hit by one into the aperture of an arrow on the body of an animal previously shot by another, becomes futile, so the fruit of the seed, cast by one in the wife of another, does not belong to him. (Hence, a son procreated on another's wife does not belong to his progenitor). It is only with his wife and progeny that a man becomes complete. Hence the wise call the husband and wife as identical. By sale or separation (abandonment) the husband and wife cannot be liberated (severed) from each other, we know this law to have been originally made by the Creator of the universe. Only once can the partition of an estate be made, only once can a girl be given away in marriage, and only once can a thing be gifted. Each of these three things can be made only for once.”

Marriage amongst the ancient Hindus was an institution of training and perpetual tutelage. The husband took entire charge of the wife—her upbringing, education, training and moulding of character. It was for this that the Shastras enjoined sufficient disparity of age between the husband and the wife. The marriageable age of the girl was enjoined to be between 9 and 11 and that of the husband close upon 30, when he had completed his own education and training and was competent to take up the education of the would-be wife. The wife being of such tender age, and her whole upbringing being in the hands of the husband, her husband became responsible for her training and the results of that training. This was the reason why the Hindu Shastras made the husband responsible for the acts and conduct of the wife and the wife not responsible for either her own or her husband's actions. With the marriage the life of a Hindu began, as it was with marriage that he settled in a household, and the comforts of home life rested solely on the married couple.

In the Svayambara marriage, the state of things was different, for such marriages could take place only in the case of girls who had attained the age of majority, i.e., 16. In these cases the wife was sufficiently educated and cultured to take upon herself the task of selecting the husband and in many cases the office of guiding the husband, as is symbolised by the charioteeing of their husbands by Subhadra and Kaikeyi. In actual warfare the task of the charioteer was more important and onerous than of the fighter or hero. The hero had to fight wherever he found himself confronted with foes, but the charioteer needed the keenness of an expert warrior, prevision and intelligence to discern and select at the right moment the spot where the hero's presence was most needed. It was for this that in the Great War of Kurukshetra none other than the great Sri Krishna, who was foremost in intelligence and political wisdom, could be the charioteer. The Svayambara marriage was confined to Kshatriya princesses only, and the heroines of both the Epics, Sita and Draupadi, were married by Svayambara ceremony.

The Svayambara marriage first originated with the marriage of Savitri, who was asked by her father to select a husband, but as she had made a defective choice, having made it without the knowledge of her father, that form of Svayambara did not continue and in future the Svayambara ceremony had to be held in the presence of the father and a public assembly of kings and distinguished personages so that there might be sufficient safeguards against a wrong or defective choice. And it was for this that at Draupadi's Svayambara the Suta Karna was not allowed to try the prescribed feat of archery, and when Arjuna, an unknown Brahmin urchin, performed the feat and

won Draupadi all the assembled Kshatriya kings rose in a body to denounce the winner and nullify the choice. They wanted to veto the choice on the ground of the impudence and audacity of a poor Brahmin to possess a highly cultured and beautiful Kshatriya princess.

But such objections did not appeal to Drupad or the distinguished Brahmin community present in the ceremony on the ground that the Pandavas combined the knowledge and wisdom of a Brahmin with the chivalry and heroism of a Kshatriya. The Brahmins offered to help the Pandavas, but Arjuna did not require their help. The five Pandavas proved quite a match for all the Kshatriya kings, which convinced Drupad and others that the five unknown Brahmins were none other than the five Pandavas, the controllers of the senses. It was not imperative or necessary that the winner should marry the girl. He could himself marry or make a gift of her to any other. It was for this that Bhishma won Amba and Ambalika for marrying them to Richitrabirja and Pandu, and Arjuna won Draupadi at the Svayambara ceremony for the marriage of Yudhishthira, and Karna did the same thing for Duryodhana.

It was a time when the commanding intellect should have the throne and not the hero. There was something which touched the heart in direct contact with the gift of Nature or God. Something beautiful and patriotic for which no sacrifice was considered too dear. It was for this that the report of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas was circulated and the Kuru, including Duryodhana and Karna, were deceived. The moral law with spiritual greatness was far superior to written law and custom. The sudden and dramatic appearance of the Pandavas as Brahmins in the Svayambara ceremony and the discovery of their adversaries in the fight that they were no other than the Pandavas, whom they thought to have been destroyed in the lac house might be said to be the real opening scene of the great Epic, where the success of the Pandavas and the winning of the emblem of prosperity, Draupadi, are a fitting prelude to their final success in the battle of Kurukshetra.

Truth cannot be obliterated. It can be discovered, if a real attempt is made. There are clear proofs in the revised Mahabharata that Draupadi was the wife of Yudhishthira alone and no one else. The revisers of the Epic did all they could to obliterate the evidences of Draupadi's real marriage with Yudhishthira but failed, and there are clear clues and observations to find out the truth even now. Remembrances last longer than present reality. The wound of conscience is no scar and time cools it not with his wing but only keeps it open with his scythe. The rose does not bloom without thorns, but they do not outlive the rose. The spirits of saints, heroes, heroines, artists, dramatists follow after the living man. Individuality is everywhere respected as the root

of everything good Every nature puts forth its own fruit and cannot do otherwise He who gives up the smallest part of a secret has no longer got the rest in his power Without poesy and art the spirit grows weary and wooden Habit and repute have been spoken of as constituting marriage, if it is not correctly described as the evidence from which marriage may be inferred Repute is not the opinion of a section of society but the general, constant and unvarying belief of friends and neighbours

Marriage was ultimately reduced to a form of contract in law when the mutual consent of parties became important Marriage under the age of puberty without consent of the parents became void This is somewhat peculiar in the human union of male and female as compared with the brute creation It is not a question of necessity for protection, as it is with beasts. It is a question of sight, speech, sympathy, companionship, partnership, love and reason, if not religion itself In fact, it is a great question of the greatest bond on earth which can embrace the whole round of all earthly endearments This is the source of ideas of mother, motherland and nationality which the Hindus even now consider higher than Heaven itself No sacrifice was too dear for mother or motherland so to defend them people gladly laid down their lives, for which act they were said to go to Heaven Manners of men and women spring from their qualities, yet their happiness or misery chiefly depend on their actions The main purpose of life is action rather than quality

"Now let us thank the Eternal Power; convinced  
That Heaven but tries our virtue by affliction,  
That of the cloud that wraps the present hour  
Serves but to brighten all our future days "

Evil times come, driving husband and wife apart from each other's beloved company to spend their days and nights in agony or sorrow, to try their individual culture and love, whether they are good and true Sita, Sabya and Damayanti were such examples, but Draupadi was quite different, as was Kunti Draupadi was the model example of a cultured queen and wife, and Kunti that of a queen mother of Ancient India Men do not agree as to the true ideal of happiness It is, no doubt, the divine gift It is nothing less than cowardice to shun the trials and crosses of life To die, in order to avert a disaster, is not noble To feel pleasure and pain and overcome the trouble largely depends on the ability, culture and education of a man and woman.

Action springs from the habits of the just and temperate, and in the acts of the wicked nothing seems to be so preposterous as those which, when they deceive, manage in some way to look most virtuous and

upright. If Draupadi's marriage was of that description her name would not have found a place in the great Epic and she would not have come down to posterity as a virtuous queen whose name is even now recited by Indians to dispel sin. Evils bring men together, i.e., when the same thing is harmful to both they become friends. "Misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows" (Shakespeare). In poverty and misfortune men think of friends as their only refuge. A good man sympathises with one in distress. Draupadi's marriage was an illustration of it. Swayambhara was a political marriage and not an ordinary marriage.

A state may be said to be a society of people, united together by families and children to live happily. Husband and wife are not mere questions of domestic happiness in a royal family. There have been political, moral and religious obligations of the highest nature in their union. It was for this that nobility and royalty carried very great respect in Ancient India. They were all distinguished men of the day and the happiness or misery of the state depended on the virtue and wisdom of the king and queen who ruled the state. They were not ordinary mortals but ideals of the highest order whom the good kings and wise sages accepted as worthy of being declared Emperor and Empress of India in Rajasuya and Asvamedha sacrifices. Yudhishthira and Draupadi, as king and queen, performed these sacrifices. Ramachandra performed the Asvamedha sacrifice with the golden image of Sita and not with the actual Sita in exile. It is a clear proof of the fact that Draupadi was not the common wife of the Pandavas, which tale was only circulated for securing peace. The marriage of Draupadi with Yudhishthira alone and not with the five Pandavas was recorded in the texts of the Mahabharata with Dhaumya\* officiating as the priest. The report was circulated merely to avert the war after the marriage as a political move of the highest importance. It was not a marriage for their own individual pleasures but for the friendship of the fighting families of India, where the ideal man and woman of the royal blood harmonised in their nuptial ties with everything humane and divine, and earned love and esteem.

The world very often judges wrongly from failures and successes in marriage, but the secret of mutual happiness seems to be mutual understanding. When people marry out of pure love and have to marry on certain disadvantageous or inconvenient conditions, they are not deterred from the marriage by prudential considerations of propriety or impropriety, or from considerations of shame or disgrace. Sometimes people marry for serving some useful purpose in life, in society or in politics. These bold facts of great love and political policy were

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\*Adi Parva, Chapter CC of the English translation of the Mahabharata



underlying the marriage of Draupadi. The sad and forlorn life of the Pandavas was sweetened by the marriage of Draupadi. The question of marriage of the Indian Epic heroines Sita and Draupadi were the outcome of boons obtained in their previous lives through religious fervour. The great poet Kalidas worked this idea into his famous poem Kumarsambhava about Uma's marriage. Uma won Siva's hand through religious austerities.

In the Epic marriage is not a question of mutual happiness of the married couple but has been a great question of politics, religion and boon of emancipation. Sita wanted Narayana to be her consort and her wish was fulfilled in her next life, but it was not happy in the worldly sense of the word. Draupadi's fate was no brighter. She triumphed in the end, but the loss of her dear and near ones was irreparable. The question of Draupadi's marriage should not be judged by the ordinary standards of custom, etc. The family of five senses represented in a man must be united to those of a woman of great culture to live closer together than ever. It was not a social bond of civilisation but what a nation ought to preserve as the lesson of marriage from the religious point of emancipation through love of unselfishness and sacrifice in thought, action and temperament. Sri Krishna was identified with Draupadi's marriage to stand up against preconceived notions, so that people and a nation could be intellectually and spiritually great in realising divine love more than mere earthly love, for which Sita entered the earth disappointed even though she was the beloved wife of Rama, an incarnation of Narayana. It was not a question of the mere controlling of passion by chaste habits and manners called chastity, the test of earthly love, whose idea was not the same throughout and all over the world in all ages.

Draupadi's marriage raises important historical, mythological and religious questions of the time. The authors of the Indian Epics with a view to create dramatic interest introduced their heroines' births, marriages and disappearances, as novelties in the realm of the religion of divine love. Their object was achieved and the greatest interest was created, but it was like the interest people feel in a thing at which they look agape. They were puzzled at the bold dramatic creation in Sita's birth from the earth and Draupadi's from fire. There was a fight between Rama and Parasurama over the breaking of the reputed bow of Siva and the Pandavas in the guise of Brahmins gave a rude shock to the chivalries of the Kshatriyas of the day by winning the prize of Draupadi, in the public assembly of Svayambara. The marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was a question of all questions in Draupadi's court and continued till the days of Janmejoya.

The revisers of the *Mahābhārata* found it difficult to reconcile this, and they attempted to do so by putting a question in king Janmejoya's mouth and answering it by quoting a peace arrangement made by the famous celestial sage Narada. But it was like the thief's mistake in forgetting to wash his feet and to obliterate his footprints. The dramatic interpolator forgot that Narada's name in Hindu mythology is synonymous with quirel-mongering and it has passed into a proverb, and for him to strive after and devise means for peace itself smacks of absurdity. His advice would better fit in with the scene after the marriage, where Karna was urging Durjodhana to give battle to the Pandavas before they could be firmly united with the Panchal and Yadus and their friends.

It is impossible to create disunion amongst them when they have a common wife, nor is it possible to estrange Draupadi from them by spies when she chose them while in adversity but now they are in prosperity. The Pandavas cannot be won over by any policy or machination or bribery or disunion. Give up that idea. It is only proper that before the Pandavas are united with the Panchals and Yadabs, Durjodhana you should now as at any time to give them immediate fight by your prowess so that the combined effort might not wear down your kingdom. Prowess is the cardinal virtue of the *kshatriyas* and one should follow this if he wants to be successful in this world.\*

It would be more appropriate for Narada then to have rather forecasted dissension and quirel among the Pandava brothers by citing the story of the destruction of Sunda and Upasunda, brothers, for the possession of the beautiful Tilottama to set at rest the wrong theory of Karna. This is the text of the advice of Karna and it was set at rest by Narada's story of Tilottama, where the two brothers fought and destroyed when trying to possess Tilottama. Durjodhana clearly admitted in his reply to Krishna during his peace mission that he was once deceived when he was young and the Pandavas got everything then but there was no chance of repeating it again.

'O Krishna' This kingdom which ought not to have been given away was given away when I depended on others, out of ignorance or fear when I was a child O Janardana! It is not now to be regained by the sons of Pandu. So long as the position of king is held by Dhritarastra, O delighter of the *Vrishnis*, not even such a small bit of land as is pierced by the point of a sharp needle shall I give to the Pandavas.†

The Svayambara of Draupadi was thought to be the proper incident and place to expose the atrocious attempt of vicious Kurus to destroy the Pandavas in the lac house. The dramatic appearance of the Pandavas in the guise of Brahmanas after long disappearance and their becoming victors in an unjust fight and the winners of Draupadi was

\* Adi Parva, Chapter CCIV, verses 6 and 21.

† Udyoga Parva, Chapter CCXVII verses 23-25.

nothing but a significant prelude to the great fight of Kurukshetra. The great Krishna, the Pandavas and Draupadi with her family came into the limelight of the political world of Ancient India. Sita was the cause of the destruction of the vicious Ravana and his family and so was Draupadi to establish the kingdom of the Pandavas, destroying the enemies of the Brahmanas, the Kurus, followers of Charvaka and Kanika. Draupadi was more accomplished and advanced than Sita in every respect. She was the friend of Krishna, wife of the wise Yudhisthira, the mainspring of the Pandava household who managed the wild powerful Bhima and the great hero Arjuna.

Every one of the five Pandavas had wives and children\*. Arjuna married Subhadra, the sister of Krishna, and the line of Arjuna ruled eventually and the composition of the Mahabharata is attributed to Arjuna's descendant Janmejaya. The historical position of the heroes and heroines of the Mahabharata can be seen in the Rajasuya and Asvamedha sacrifices of the Pandavas. They were the crowning ceremonies of king Yudhisthira after the marriage and the war. Here the great Draupadi was installed as the queen of Yudhisthira on both occasions. The heroism of Krishna and his great services in the cause of humanity by the destruction of Jarasandha, who was going to be declared the Emperor of India by a cruel human sacrifice, the liberation of the numerous kings of India kept in prison by him, the clearing of the great forest of Khandaba and the founding of Indraprastha by the Pandavas were recognised in spite of strong opposition from Sisupala by according the place of honour to Krishna in the Rajasuya sacrifice. Krishna killed Sisupala and won the laurel of oblation and reverence there. The party who made Sisupala their mouthpiece had to yield. There was no objection to Draupadi's being declared the Empress of India in the Rajasuya.

A still more absurd attempt is found in the explanation of the absurdity of the marriage by making Yudhisthira agree to and advise the joint marriage out of fear of difference and wrath betrayed in the demeanour of his brothers. Not to speak of the still more absurd explanation spun out of an alleged absurdly foolish and ignorant behest of Kunti to her sons to enjoy in common the fruit of their begging, which they had told her they had got, without first caring to ascertain what the fruit was, nor could the good Pandavas seriously be believed to have been so wanting in their duty as to be joking with their mother by describing Draupadi as a fruit of begging, which she certainly was not. All these seemingly paradoxical explanations show the idle brains of rhapsodists. These explanations, though they have not satisfied people, have stilled

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\* Adi Parva, Chapter XCV, verses 75-80

questionings, like putting a host of syllogisms to flight with a sneer or with a quotation of spurious authority. The culmination of absurdity is reached when learned students of the Epics swallow this absurd fiction as a fact and use it as a lever to throw back the whole age of the Epic rather than the far simpler, more rational and logical course of throwing away this absurdity as a base fiction.

The births, marriages and disappearances of the heroines of the great Indian Epics formed the bedrock of Hindu mythology of the religion of divine love and nothing else. It was for this the heroines of the Indian Epics sought the form of Svayambara marriage not recited in the recognised Hindu institutes of Manu, etc. The ideas of morality, decency and chastity were far more advanced, strict and hard in the age when the Pandavas flourished than in the Vedic age. Since the days of Svetaketu and Dirghatama the Hindu marriage system was crystallised into a sacrament and regulated by laws, as is evident from the discussions and objections of Drupad and his son as well as from the text of the great Epics. It cannot be overlooked that Madhavi, daughter of King Yajati, who had not hesitated to be given away to four kings successively to propagate the lines of kings in Ancient India, sternly refused to comply with her father's wish when he asked her to accept marriage by Svayambara and she went to the woods to practise religious austerities. Her refusal to accept marriage by Svayambara was inconsistent with the ideas of life then prevalent. It may be that Madhavi's marriage with the four signifies nothing but the Vedic form of marriage in which Soma accepts first, then Gandharva, then Agni, and then the son of man is the fourth to accept the girl, as recited before from the Panchavimsa Brahmana. Fire is invoked as favouring law of worshippers, the divine punisher and the great witness of the unbreakable marriage tie. Poor dramatic revisers, to make the Pandavas demi-gods, foisted upon Kunti the story and the name of Madhavi in the great Epic \*

The theory of divine love is beautifully clear in the presence of Sri Krishna by the discovery of five Pandavas in the form of Brahmins and winning over Maya or Prakriti in Draupadi or Krishnah. It may mean that the five senses reflected in the five Pandavas in the receptacle of Maya displayed in Draupadi must be combined and co-ordinated with true and sincere love, for marriage without such auxiliary co-ordination of the forces of love, the concentration of mind controlling the five senses, cannot be effected in producing divine love. Krishna's famous conch-shell was named Panchajanya and Draupadi's marriage to Panchajan (five persons) or five senses cannot but have clear relation to

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\*Professor M. N. Dutt's Translation, *Adi Parva (Jatugriha)* Chapter CL, verse 6.

divine love The conch Panchajanya gave warning of impending danger and death to friends and foes alike on the religious battlefield of Kurukshetra, demonstrating the works of Panchajan (Pandavas) under the leadership of Sri Krishna wedded to the divine love of Draupadi to send even the wicked and vile to Heaven to be transformed into good

It is for this that the author describes Yudhishthira, the incarnation of virtue, on his translation to Heaven to have first found there his wicked adversaries, who fell victims on the famous battlefield and not his own brothers or wife The question put by Professor Max Muller in his "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," why was Drupad's daughter Krishna, the common wives of the sons of Pandu? should not have found a place in it, (p 47), for one answer to it is to be found in the Markandeya Purana which is as follows —

"The adorable Indra (king) became incarnate in five forms His auspicious wife was born as Krishna from Agni (fire), she Krishna was the wife of Indra alone and no one else"

Indra, it is said in the Shanti Parva, Chapter LXVII, verse 4, is the name of a king —

"The *Śrutis* (Vedas) say that in crowning a king, it is Indra that is crowned in the person of the king A person who seeks his own prosperity, should adore the king as he should adore Indra himself"

Besides, it cannot be overlooked that there is the important allusion to the five deities anxious to possess Damayanti at her Svayambara marriage ceremony

Thereupon the fair complexioned Damayanti entered the amphitheatre and thus attracted the eyes and hearts of the assembled princes When the kings beheld her, their eyes, unmoved, were firmly fixed upon those parts of her body wherever they had fallen first Thereupon, O Bharata, the names of the kings having been uttered, the daughter of Bhima beheld five persons all alike in their form Thereafter the daughter of the king of Vidarbhas, having seen all of them of similar forms, could not make out which one was prince Nala, for doubts had already arisen in her mind Whomever she saw amongst the kings, she supposed him to be the prince Nala, and thus the thoughtful lady pondered, and deliberated in her mind 'How shall I discern the gods, and how shall I ascertain prince Nala?' This thought engrossed the mind of the daughter of the king of the Vidarbhas, and also afflicted her with great grief O Bharata, she deliberated in her mind upon the marks of which she heard, as appertaining to the gods — 'I have heard from the old men whatever marks belong to the celestials, and indeed these are never seen to appertain to any one of these assembled in this earth.' Thus she thought on this subject over and over in several ways, and came to the conclusion, *viz* — that she should, after saluting the celestials, with the mind and words, and with joined hands, resolve upon obtaining the assistance of the gods themselves Trembling with fear she spoke to the celestials thus 'On hearing the words of the swans I accepted the prince of the Nishadas as my husband For the sake of that vow of mine, O celestials, point him out to me As I am always firm to him either in speech or thought, so for the sake of that truth, it befores the celestials to point him out to me When it was settled to

\* Professor Pargiter's Markandeya Purana, canto V, verses 24-25.

me by the celestials that the prince of the Nishadhas should be my husband for the sake of that truth it behoves the celestials to point him to me. When I have commenced my vow for the worship of King Nala for the sake of that truth, it behoves the celestials to reveal him to me. It behoves the Devapatis the most excellent of the gods therefore, to assume their respective forms, that I may ascertain that virtuous prince (Nala). The celestials, having heard the words of Damayanti full of compassion, and knowing for certain that her love for the prince of the Nishadhas was most fervent and also realising her fixed and pure heart and mind and her passion for that prince fulfilled but they had been proved for by assuming their proper forms. She then beheld all the gods, not perspiring with fixed and spotless garlands round their necks and seated without touching the earth. She on the other hand saw Nala standing pre-eminent with his own shade and unlike the gods full of perspiration, and with floral wreaths stained with dust and the king of the Nishadhas was also seated on the ground with a ringed eye. She saw both the celestials and that righteous king. The daughter of Bhima rejected as her husband the prince of the Nishadhas in accordance with her vow. The bashful and large eyed maiden held the flying end of her cloth and put a most handsome garland round his neck. Thus the fair faced damsel had chosen him as her lord. Thereupon all the celestials suddenly gave utterance to their awe by saying 'Ah! Alas!' All the celestials and the great sages became struck with amazement and uttered the cry 'Excellent and Excellent' while at the same time they were praising King Nala. O Kauravya the prince—the son of Virasena, with the gladness of heart, consoled that fair complexioned maiden thus—'O blessed one as you rejecting all the gods, chose a man to be your lord so know me therefore, for your husband, ever ready to obey your words for command. O you of blameless smiles, I truly promise to you that as long as my life will reside in my body, till then I will continue to be yours.' Damayanti, with joined hands, showed due respect to him (Nala) by similar expressions. Thereupon the happy pair, each having seen those celestials headed by Agni, mentally prayed for their protection. Then the guardians of the worlds in great splendour beholding the prince of the Nishadhas accepted by the daughter of Bhima, became greatly gratified and they all granted to Nala eight boons. At first Sakra, the husband of Sachī, well pleased, bestowed upon the king of the Nishadhas a boon, viz., that in the sacrifices he should attain to divinity and thence to each of the extraordinarily great and happy abodes. Agni gave assurance of his own presence wherever the king of the Nishadhas would wish. Hutashana also granted to him regions as resplendent as himself. Then again Yama lent him a superior taste for food, as well as a highest place in virtue. The presiding god of the water granted to Nala the boon of his own presence wherever he would wish, as well as floral wreaths of superior fragrance. Thus each one of the assembled gods had given Nala a couple of boons. Having granted these boons to him all the celestials returned to Heaven.\*

Besides, there is a story of the Mahabharata which illustrates in the examples of the Pandavas five essential things on which success in life depends, viz. patience, wisdom, progress, skill, place and time. The great author inculcated this, putting it in the mouth of the god of wealth, Kuvera, (Bana Parva, Chapter CLXII, verse 1), and finally connecting the Pandavas

"O the best of men and mighty armed one being appointed by me will protect you as well as these best of the Brahmanas. O king, O the best of the virtuous, O

\* The Mahabharata, Chapter LVII, Vana Parva, verses 8—39, pages 84-85 (English Translation) by Professor M. N. Dutt

pure one, considering that Bhima has come here through rashness, do you check him. O king, henceforth creatures inhabiting the forest will always visit you, wait on you, and protect you all. O the best of men, my attendants will always procure for you various eatables and drinkables, as sweet to the taste. As Jishnu (Arjuna) has a claim to the protection of Mahendra, Vrikodari of the wind god, son of Dharmā, and the powerful twins of the Āsvins, in virtue of being their respective offspring; so, O Yudhisthira, you all have a claim to my protection. Bhagunthi next by birth to Bhimasena, versed in the science of prout, and acquainted with the principles of all duties, is all right in Heaven. O child, these virtues which are considered in the world as leading to Heaven, reside in Bhimanjaya even from his very birth. In that high souled being of unrivalled energy reside all these qualities of self control, charity, strength, intelligence, modesty, patience and excellent energy. O Pandavas, Jishnu never commits any disgraceful act even through ignorance. And men never speak to their fellows of his ever having uttered lies.\*

The Mahabharata is a history of success, victory or Yaya as referred to in the very invocation verse. Apart from the innate absurdity of a marriage of one cultured delicate girl with five powerful, well-built heroes of the day, not spoken of in any of the nineteen institutes or codes of ancient Hindu laws, the story in question had perhaps much to do with the creation of this fiction. One can hardly overlook that prosperity and success in the mundane and spiritual world depend more upon the five attributes than anything else. The institutes of the Hindus mention ten purificatory rites, and marriage is one of them. The object in making the Pandavas appear as Brahmins at the Svayambara place meant that they went through the necessary purificatory rites and initiations just as rigidly as a Brahmin could observe them and there they were far superior to any of the Kshatriya princes present in the assembly. Draupadi stood for prosperity or joy in life and to win her would require the co-ordination of these five qualities coupled with the sympathy of universal love reflected in Sri Krishna, the only source of success in all spheres of life. The Pandavas won the sympathy and love of Sri Krishna not by connection of birth or relationship but by their good conduct and at the time of the purificatory ceremony of marriage. Draupadi was not won by the shooting of the target by an arrow but by the declaration of Sri Krishna at the final decision of the bridal party.

"Vaishampayana said.—Seeing that few of Bhishma and Kunti's sons were both to be the sons of Kunti. Gently addressing the assembly he said, 'This maiden has been greatly won by the Brahmanas. I have seen her from the flight. Having thus detected her as the daughter of the Pandavas (heroes) well skilled in battle, we turned to their respective duties.' He was exceedingly surprised."

It was the divine love of Sri Krishna, the guiding force of the Pandavas, which led the Pandavas to the Svayambara.

\* The Mahabharata, Van Pancha, Chapter CLXI.

† Adi Parva, Chapter CXII.

Translation by Professor M. N. Dutt.

padl He knew of the escape of the Pandavas from the lac house and urged all about the marriage of Draupadi with her father. He and his brother Balarama encouraged the Pandavas with words of sympathy and success by a private visit to them in their hiding place. The following quotations from the great Epic will speak for themselves. Drupada's parting words are significant from the discovery of the man who was at the bottom of the marriage of Draupadi.

"Having considered all the circumstances, I certainly agree with the foremost of men, the heroic and mighty armed Dasaratha (Krishna). There is no doubt the illustrious sons of Kunti the Pandavas are no time as they are to Vasudewa. The son of Kunti Yudhishthira, himself does not seek the welfare of the Pandavas so much as this foremost of men Keshava (Krishna) does."

Krishna and Balarama visited the Pandavas privately before the marriage.

"Be blessed, grow in prosperity as a fire in a cave gradually grows and spreads itself all around. Let any of the kings recognise you give us permission to return to our camp. Then obtaining the permission of the Pandavas, Krishna of undying prosperity, accompanied with Valadeva soon went away."

Krishna knew that the Pandavas were not burnt at the lac house.

"I heard that the sons of Pandu and Pritha had escaped from the fire of the lac house. Then Halayuda of the complexion of clouds charged with rains spoke thus to his younger brother in joy. 'I am glad to hear that our father's sister Pritha, with the foremost of the Kuru Princes (the Pandavas) has escaped (from the lac house)'"

It was Vyasa who visited the Pandavas and invited them to come with a duly appointed priest to the Svayambara of Draupadi. It was he who invested Drupada with the celestial sight by his wonderful ascetic power to make him realise that the so-called five was actually one. Drupada was greatly surprised at seeing the celestial manifestation of illusion and touched the feet of Vyasa, praising him very much. His words before and after the marriage are very significant (Chapter CC) and are as follow —

"Drupada said — O great Rishi it is only when I had not heard from you all this that I intended to act in the way I have already told you. I am now incapable of acting against what has been ordained by the celestials. I therefore desire to act as you have said. The knot of destiny cannot be untied. There is nothing which is the result of our own actions. That which was made to secure one husband (for my daughter) becomes now the source of this (new) ordinance. As Krishna (Drupadi) had repeatedly asked (in her former life) for five times saying "Give me a husband," the great deity had granted her the boon accordingly. The deity himself knows the right or the wrong of this."

\* Adi Parva, Chapter CCIX, page 231, verses 7—9

† Adi Parva, Chapter CCIII, page 264, verse 26

‡ The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter CCXI, page 261 (English Translation by Professor M. N. Dutt) Verses 23-24

§ Adi Parva Chapter CC, verses 1—3, page 272



It is evident from this that Drupada realised the policy behind the declaration. Nor is this all. The Mahabharata gives the names of sages of pure soul immortalised by their knowledge and works in the version of Yudhisthira as follows —

“You have seen with your own eyes the great ascetic Markandeya of incomparable magnanimity come to us who has been rendered immortal by virtue. Vyasa, Vasistha, Maitreya, Narada, Lomasha, Suka and all other Rishis have become of pure souls by virtue.”\*

It is evident prominence is given to Markandeya over Vyasa, Narada, etc. It is therefore clear that where there is difference in the versions of Vyasa, Markandeya's version must prevail and is the deciding factor. It is quite plain that there is a mystery behind the five husbands of Draupadi as Vyasa refused to talk on this matter publicly (*vide* Adi Parva, Chapter CXCVIII, verses 19—21) and took Drupada aside. It is quite evident that in those days of great advancement it became necessary to devise means to impress things upon the imagination of the general public. The author of the great Epic had to dispense with the dry, prosaic presentation of abstract causes and of brilliant success in life and resorted to personifications of them in the Pandavas, created Draupadi as an emblem of success or prosperity and presented Sri Krishna in the limelight of universal love instead of partisanship in the Svayambara fight from the very first appearance in the Epic.

That the great author created five different persons as sons of great deities of religion and elements instead of showing the combination of the five qualities in one ideal man, *etc.*, by the personifications of justice, truth and forbearance in Yudhisthira, of prowess in Bhima, of skill and dutiful following in Arjuna and of the ever inseparable correlations of time and place in the twins Nakul and Sahadeb, are quite clear in the great Epic. The co-ordination of these qualities combined with the love of Draupadi and sympathy of Sri Krishna, the universal solvent, achieved the glorious success on the great religious battle field of Kurukshetra.

The great Epic, history of success as it is called, has a greater and higher sphere of action than mere history of incidents of social life. The marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas, representing as it does the five attributes of success or prosperity from the material to the spiritual world, cannot necessarily be a question of physical connection of body. If it were so, Draupadi would have been connected and known with an epithet characteristic of five husbands, instead of Krishnah or Panchali, nor was Kunti known by any such name establishing her connection with the gods above. Likewise the names of their

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\* Vana Parva, Chapter XXXI, verses 11, 12, page 45

sons were not connected with their fathers like Draupadi and Pandavas or Kaunteya or Partha. Partha does not mean Arjuna alone in Shanti Parva, Chapter 195. Yudhishthira is addressed by that name. Yudhishthira was known by the special name of Ajitasatru (enemyless), Bhima dreadful, Arjuna ambidexterous.

Kunti or Karna had no such name justifying their connection with the God Sun. The Indian Pluto was called the father of Yudhishthira for his piety, truth, faith and unbiased judgment. The Indian Pluto, Yama, declares his feat on the day of judgment. He was the son of the God Sun, necessarily a question of great importance so far as Heavenly decency is concerned arises in the alleged use of sage Durbasa's incantation by which Kunti was reported to have a son Karna by the Sun and Yudhishthira by the Sun's son, Yama or Dharma or Pluto, especially when the Epic relates the fall of King Mahavishnu, Gangra, Urbasi, etc., from Heaven on that very ground of decency. The names of Kunti and Draupadi are found connected with their fathers' names. Kunti's real name was Pritha. Draupadi's name Krishna refers to her blue sky like complexion, like Sri Krishna and Panchali, for recovering the lost glory of her father's kingdom, her own birth place. Besides, she was the first Nationalist lady of the front rank and rendered the greatest service by levelling to the ground the vanity and unjust domination of Kshatriya kings of India in the great battle fought at Kurukshetra to destroy the atheism of Charvaka in person and theory.

The peculiar complexion and characteristics of the age represented in Draupadi made her the real heroine of the great Epic of a later day, in spite of her name not being found in its table of contents anywhere so as to justify her becoming the centre of attraction and interest in the great Epic over her marriage question. Moral revolutions mislead men more than physical ones. Wisdom and morality are the organic parents of the mental future. Deeds and books are the means by which men have been able to work upon the world. Three things are very difficult to discover and to impart, firstly, distance hides the finer side of virtue and the black spots of vice in the past in the decorative paintings in the Epic, secondly, what is below and above the earth, and thirdly, what is God.

Living religion grows not by doctrines but by the narratives of the holy books. The best religious doctrine is that taught by the lives of the different prophets with the sufferings and deaths of their followers. Happiness dances, it seems, in childhood, the active body dances after the happy soul, but in youth the earth is a beloved place full of childish remembrances, the feeling of indescribable strength and sweetness, the star of love flying over the blossoms of youth to smile and sigh

in a golden horizon of infinite hope, of morning red round the rising sun. But the mature man or woman can in dancing only express the beauty of art, not themselves nor their own emotions. Love would thus comfort itself in artistic forms rather than natural. Nature sent man and woman the bridal dower of love. Feelings come and go like the troops following a victory. Reasons change and affect the firm man more easily than women. Lightning passes through solid bodies better than the thin air. Mothers and wives are more devoted than fathers and husbands. They make more sacrifices than men for their love.

Woman is all heart; she feels but does not see herself. She seldom does anything with reason. But certainly an educated maiden like Draupadi is a poetic flower of love in the dull world. She is the dream picture of Holy Eden, her sufferings of life her patriotic love and religion are very beautiful. One must understand that the Epic characters are not the representatives of the sham world, full of custom and having nothing of duty and sacrifice. Draupadi and Yudhishthira belonged to the great world where nobility of soul, character, principles and patriotism are more valued than cut and dried rules of life. They were despisers of pleasures and examples of earnestness of purpose, who brought all things into life and ascended the throne of eternity. Charms lie on the surface, glitter and produce vanity, but the excellence of morality leaves its possessors modest and lies beneath the surface. Nature meant to make and made woman its masterpiece. He who can disregard law is quite as powerful as he who is bound by no law, and such is also the case with a woman. Wisdom is only in truth. He is the happiest man who can place the end of his life in connection with the beginning. Yudhishthira and Draupadi came to the world with a certain mission in life which they fulfilled. He who does not think too much of himself is much more esteemed than he who does. In all times it is only individuals who labour to advance knowledge by their culture and examples and the ages are not responsible for the progress of virtue suppressing vice. "The first and last thing which is required of genius," says Goethe, "is the love of truth." The author of the Great Epic lays down the principle when circumstances justify the telling of a lie and it is considered virtuous or *vice versa* in Chapter 82, verses 16-17.\*

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\*English Translation of the Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LXXXII, page 123, verses 16-17 — "It is not sinful to speak falsehood in the following five cases, namely in joke, in respect of women to be associated with, in marriage, in prospect of immediate death, and at the time of the loss of one's whole fortune. O king, it is not true that he is fallen who does not speak out the truth when asked (for there are occasions when to speak falsehood is an act of piety). The falsehood is sinful when one (harmful) object is to be accomplished."

It is evident from the above quotation that the alleged political subterfuge was resorted to in the report of Draupadi's marriage with all the Pândavas, which was quite contrary to what had actually taken place. Moral character carries with it the highest power of causing a thing to be believed. It is held that virtue and vice are to be considered with the intention behind the act and not the act itself or its report. Law is a mere pledge, it cannot make all good unless there is proper education and culture. Nobility is created by the morality due to education and manners not corrupted from infancy. If the masses refrain from doing wrong from the mere fear of punishment, then sheer want will make them the worst beasts. Virtue and vice depend upon education and discipline more than anything else. Nobility is the virtue of a family. It has very little or no connection with birth at first, until a family gives proof of it in continuous succession. Morality is nothing but a standard of temperate habits of life and discipline. Men and women must have perception of good and evil.

A state has a distinct and important duty, like parents of a family, to bring unity among men of different inclinations, like children, by strict practice of discipline, education and rule, performing their legitimate functions in co-operating for the general welfare instead of fighting for selfish ends. It is quite natural for everyone to have an affection for his own, but to have such a love in excess of what is legitimate is a vice. In works of art the excellence lies in the workmanship, but virtuous deeds themselves show no such thing but the man or woman who is their author is extolled for his or her individual character. He acts knowingly with deliberate choice and with fixed aim and principle so that his acts are equitable to all. He does not assert his rights to the utmost but is willing to take something less, even though he may have law on his side. It is for this that Yudhishthira asked for Panchagrama, not five villages, but there was the significant, the sly hint against the Kurus. Duryodhana and his friends realised the true implication of the word Panchagrama (meaning control over the five senses) and were so annoyed with the home-thrust, that they feigned to take it in the literal sense and openly declared before the public assembly that not to speak of five villages not even the space held by a needle's point would be given without warfare, and held consultation as to how to imprison Sri Krishna.

Mothers are fonder of their children than fathers, as mothers know the pain of bringing them forth and have knowledge of their own. Good men sympathise most with themselves in joy and sorrow for the same always gives them the same pain and joy. Animals live in a state of

nature and in few things by custom, but man has to depend on something else called reason.

In the eyes of a wise judge proofs of reasoning are of more value than eye-witnesses. Glory follows virtue as if it were its shadow. The Hindus even now recite the names of virtuous Kunti and Draupadi, as the ideal mother and wife, to dispel the sins of domestic life. Not to prove what happened before one was born is always to be a child. The great poet Shakespeare said —

“If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre”

(HAMLET, Act II, Scene 2)

Nature has inspired man with a desire for seeing the truth. Reason is the mistress and queen of all things. Philosophy rose from the powers of mind. It roots out vice and prepares the mind to solve the great question of divinity. There is no greater theatre for virtue than conscience. Mind has comprehended the revolution of the earth, the complicated attractions and movements of planets and earth which make day and night, eclipse, ebb and flow. Is it difficult for such a human intellect to find out the truth of Draupadi's marriage? It was realised by the revisers that it would be difficult to reconcile the report of Draupadi's marriage with the Pandavas and every attempt was made to explain it in different ways.

Apart from the all important serious aspects of the question of Draupadi's marriage there is something very comic in it. Envy is the worst of all the ills of life. It is the base attendant of an impious soul. Birth and death are equally mysterious, but marriage is not. Satire is the best enjoyment in marriage celebrations of the Hindu even now. Everyone tries to raise a laugh to add enjoyment to the marriage assembly. Many things were said without much thought other than to raise a laugh. Even the great characters were not spared and the young and the old, even the mad rabble, repeat it. The report of the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was a sort of red rag to the mad bulls of disappointed princes, and nobody could object to it as the occasion was one for merry-making and jest. The report went abroad and got a firm footing in the mind of the mob amidst the joyous festival.

“Satire's my weapon, but I'm too discreet  
To run amuck, and tilt at all I meet” (Pope 234, Latin)

“The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name”

SHAKESPEARE

(Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V, Scene I)

The mind charmed by false appearances refuses to admit the truth  
 "His comic humour kept the world in a ro,  
 And Laughter frightened folly more than La r "

Ridicule often cuts the Gordian Knot more effectively and better than severity of satire.

The epithet Ajatsatru attached to the name of Yudhisthira has a tale to tell about the invectives found in the great Epic against the great man. The reasons are not far to seek.

"When malice is joined to envy, there is given forth poisonous and feculent matter, as ink from the cuttle fish."

The name Ajatsatru was borne by a powerful king of Benares and also by another king of Magadha who became a convert to Buddhism. The king Ajatsatru of Benares was very anti-Brahmanical, and the other king Ajatsatru had forsaken the Brahmanical religion altogether. The Brahmins naturally had a great animus for the Ajatsatrus, and in order to belittle Ajatsatrus, it is no wonder if they introduced Draupadi's five husbands episode, her dragging into the public assembly and the unseemly and shocking attempt to make her nude, their exile and their wanderings in the forest, to heap ridicule and contempt on this Ajatsatru, in the hope that the ignominies of one Ajatsatru would be visited upon all Ajatsatrus.

It is well-known that Yajnavalkya, who was instrumental in the dramatic revision, belonged to Mithila (Videha), and though Videhi Sita was exiled for a mere breath of suspicion for her being touched by Ravana, the dramatic revision makes Draupadi, not only touched, but dragged by the hair into the public hall and there attempted to be unclothed and made nude. They also intended a hit against the Buddhist Ajatsatru by making this Ajatsatru (Yudhistira) have a common wife with his brothers like Buddhist Tihetans who used to have a common wife for all the brothers.

These seemingly divergent standards of chastity in the two Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, bespeak different influences. Benares, which was the place of Vyasa and was once the centre of Buddhist influence, presented one standard of chastity, and Videha (Mithila), which was the centre of Yajnavalkya's influence, presented a far stricter standard of chastity. Sita for a mere breath of suspicion of alien touch was thought unfit to participate in the coronation of Rama, but Draupadi, though represented as the common wife of five husbands, was not in any way thought unfit to be crowned empress at Yudhistira's coronation. From all these it is abundantly clear that there were some mysterious influences at work behind this creation of the heroine of the

dramatic Mahabharata, whereas the heroines of the original Mahabharata were Kunti and Gandhari, as set out in the Anukramanika, where the name of Draupadi does not occur

The theory of transmigration of souls, of which Yajnavalkya was the propounder, is also illustrated in both the Epics, in the Ramayana by Sita, who in her former life was Bedavati and in the Mahabharata by Draupadi, who in her former life was an austere worshipper of Siva and had got a boon from him to have Indra as her husband, and in her next life she became a worshipper of Sri Krishna.

"The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad contains an interesting conversation, in which King Ajatsatru of Kasi (Benares) instructs the Brahman, Balaki Gargya, that Brahma is not the spirit (Purusha) which is in sun, moon, wind, and other natural phenomena, or even in the (waking) soul (Atman), but is either the dreaming soul, which is creative, assuming any form at pleasure, or, in the highest stage, the soul in dreamless sleep, for here all phenomena have disappeared. This is the first and the last condition of Brahma, in which no world exists, all material existence being only the phantasms of the dreaming world soul."

"Of somewhat similar purport is a passage of the Chhandogya (viii 7-12), where Prajapati is represented as teaching the nature of the Atman in three stages. The soul in the body as reflected in a mirror or water is first identified with Brahma, then the dreaming soul, and, lastly, the soul in dreamless sleep.

"How generally accepted the pantheistic theory must have become by the time the disputations at the court of King Janaka took place, is indicated by the form in which questions are put. Thus two different sages in the Brihadaranyaka (iii 4 5) successively ask Yajnavalkya in the same words 'Explain to us the Brahma which is manifest and not hidden, the Atman that dwells in everything'."

"With the doctrine that true knowledge led to supreme bliss by the absorption of the individual soul in Brahma went hand in hand the theory of transmigration (samsara). That theory is developed in the oldest Upanishads, it must have been firmly established by the time Buddhism arose, for Buddha accepted it without question. Its earliest form is found in the Satapatha Brahmana, where the notion of being born again after death and dying repeatedly is coupled with that of retributions. Thus it is here said that those who have correct knowledge and perform a certain sacrifice are born again after death for immortality, while those who have not such knowledge and do not perform this sacrifice are reborn again and again, becoming the prey of Death."

Yajnavalkya was one of the most important personages of India. He was a law giver, religious preceptor and performer of sacrifices of the famous kings Janaka and Yudhisthira. A gotra of that name was found among the Vasisthas.† He was identified with the Satapatha Brahmana, Yoga system of philosophy, and with the important task of revising the Mahabharata. The work of his uncle Vaisampayana was spoilt by him to demonstrate his theory of transmigration and he illustrated it in Draupadi's birth and marriage.

\* Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature" pages 222-223

† Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition" page 237

The Indian Epics represent that their heroines Sita and Draupadi practised religious austerities in their previous lives for ideal husbands. The so-called boons proved to be veritable curses in their life-long sufferings. It is quite evident from this that it cannot but be a satire. Whoever might be the author of the great Epic, he failed to see that if a god, who had granted the boon, could not comprehend and grasp the real intention of his worshipper, then he would not be worthy of being called a real god. The report of Draupadi's marriage with five men brought vile calumny on her and what is worse still, one finds in the Epic that the definition of a harlot is put in the mouth of Kunti as the wife of five husbands and it is the self-same Kunti who gives definite direction to the wise and virtuous Yudhishthira to make Draupadi the wife of the five Pandava brothers. It can be read only as a satire and nothing else.

Nor is this all. Kunti was called upon to raise children through three gods and when she was pressed by her husband to do more, then she gave out the definition of a harlot and denounced Madri's simultaneous connections with two Aswini kumars. The idea of high gods' connections with the wives of king Pandu who retired to the forest to practise asceticism, is nothing less than a gross blasphemy. It can only be either a satire or a high idea that when a husband should give up all connections with his wives they should think of God above, who would bless them with dutiful sons through their husbands by His divine dispensation. The Epic says that the royal sage had connection with Madri before he retired from the world. However, it must be said that "nothing improves by a translation except a bishop," as the well-known saying goes, so nothing improves by an improvement on a genuine original except where it was imperfect.

One cannot overlook the very significant fact that the numbers one, three, five, seven and nine were the marks of different ages of progress in the succeeding periods of ancient civilisation in India. There was one God and one Veda in the beginning, then three, then five, then seven and the last number in the digits is nine, with which the nine planets were identified ruling the human destiny. It is even now believed and followed that in order to undo the evil influences of planets they should be propitiated. People observe the eclipses of the sun and moon with great religious fervour even now. The time when the revision of the Mahabharata took place seemed to have been when there was a fancy for the number five. The worship of five gods still lingers to the present day in Hindu worship.

The ancient idea of a Hindu wife worshipping her husband in the form of a god is found and is piously observed by a good wife even



now. Her husband is the only god before a good wife, and when that husband happens to be a king he is worshipped in the five different forms of a god. This has been recited in the *Shanti Parva*, Chapter LXVIII, verse 41. It appears that five qualities and quantities were then found necessary for any perfect form of worship. The very god Siva who granted the boon to Draupadi was worshipped not in the usual form but in the five limbs of Siva and is distinguished by the name of Pancha Kedar, a well-known shrine of India. It has been shown that five qualities are necessary in a man for success, both in the material and in the spiritual world. The true implication of five husbands seems to have been to represent to the world the well-known account of the famous Nili-Damayanti, which is recited in the *Mahabharata*. It was a *Svayambhara* form of marriage and five gods appeared before Damayanti in the form of her lover Nili, whom she wanted to have as her husband in preference to the gods. She made the right selection and was blessed by the five gods with eight boons, and one cannot miss the important connection with the eight forms of Gayatri blessings in the marriage of the famous wife of Vasishta, Arundhati, who was said to have been translated to Heaven as a star to guide the chaste ladies of earth, which are connected with the name of Draupida.\*

Draupadi got the blessings of the five gods like Damayanti and was not separated from her husband on account of the cruel dice play but followed the Pandavas through their worst trial. The Pandavas stood united is one by her superior intelligence, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty, if not the highest tact and culture. Their enemies failed to separate them at the Dice Hill by all sorts of tricks and indignities. The old king wrongly understood the marriage of Draupadi, which is an instance of a dramatic stroke of great importance. He was abashed to find out his mistake that Draupadi was not married to his son Durjodhana but to Yudhishthira. Now he won her and all the possessions of the king Yudhishthira, yet the auspicious signs made the blind Dhritarashtra offer boons to her which might be read as the marriage gift after many years. Besides the old blind king after the end of the war was given an iron Bhima in place of real Bhima when he wanted to embrace him. The old man crushed it and the stratagem saved Bhima. All these are nothing but satire and dramatic scenes, quite incompatible with the serious literature of the ancient Epic of India.

Marriage was not merely a political or social bond of royal families but it was an initiation and purification ceremony to enter the spiritual life to realise the divine love, the centre of universal love. It was for this that the three gods showered sacred waters on the heads of the

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\* *Kalika Purana*, Chapter XXIII, verses, 118—120

married couple Vasistha and Arundhati with the significant Drupada Gayatri incantations. Kalika Purana mentions the marriage of the great king Santanu with the daughter of Hiranyagarbha in Chapter LXXXII. The beautiful features of the queen Amogha excited the passion of the great Brahma and from his sweat flowed the river Brahmaputra, whose sacred water expiated the sin of matricide committed by Parasurama. It would appear that the king Santanu was one of the earlier heroes of the Bharata Samhita and if the two accounts of the birth of Bhisma and Brahmaputra are read together along with the defeat of Parasurama at the hands of Bhisma for the great wrong committed by him at the Swayambhara ceremony of Amba, who was sought to be married against her own will to king Bichitravirya, then it would appear that the king Santanu mentioned in the great Epic and the Kalika Purana were identical. It seems that Bhisma stood against Parasurama when he offered obstacles to the flow of the Ganges into King Santanu's kingdom. Santanu's marriage with the Ganges mentioned in the Mahabharata is nothing but a piece of metaphor, as she presented the son to the king who was practising archery on the bank and the Ganges came to the king after her disappearance.

Bhisma was a novel creation of the great Epic as an emblem of sacrifice on the marriage altar of his father Santanu, and Draupadi was the female picture of sacrifice, the emblem of piety and devotion to the great wrongs of her father and husband in relation to the establishment of the idea of universal love in the marriage function in the presence of the great Sri Krishna, who initiated her.

The two Indian Epics present different pictures of marriage ceremonies. Rama followed the example of King Dushamanta and went a step further. King Dushamanta disowned the secret marriage with Sakuntala and acknowledged it when the voice from Heaven was heard by the assembly. Rama exiled Sita even after the fire ordeal only to satisfy his subjects. Pururava and Urvashi's love gave rise to Aila Gita and Yajati Gatha and these raise the great question of ancient marriage from the very beginning, showing that it was a question of divine love and not earthly love. "Desires never die. They are not satiated by indulgence. By indulgence they flame up like the sacrificial fire with the combustible clarified butter poured into it." This is the essence of Yajati Gatha.

In the marriage of King Santanu with Satyawati, Bhisma was made to give a pledge that he would not claim the throne for his son or himself. Bhisma, Drona, Kripa and Kripa were orphans who were brought up by the king and became great warriors of the day. If they were not dismissed as fictitious characters merely introduced to develop the plot

with dramatic effect at a later age, then it shows that marriage was reduced to the low level of political and social union for ambitions of life or just to rise in the estimation of the selfish world. The marriage of Draupadi has no relation to it. It is the opening scene of the great Epic. Sri Krishna was to demonstrate the great truth that marriage was the first and foremost initiation of holy, religious and spiritual life in contrast with a mere social bond of self and selfish ends. Draupadi was united with the five senses of the human body to illumine the dead energy by love. It is the fire which cooks the flesh and blood of carnality to prepare the nectar for the heart to realise the divine love through the universality of Panchajan.

Panchajan literally means the five elements with which the creation was made. They are represented in the inert Purusha and the energy of the creator is reflected in Prakriti in Samkhya philosophy. The author of the dramatic edition of the great Epic presents the first thing of his creation in the union of Draupadi (Prakriti) with the Pandavas, the five elements (Purusha). Furthermore, it is said in Naya philosophy that one's chariot was destroyed and another's horse was burnt by fire and both of them were in great danger of being destroyed by the fire, but when they were united and joined one's horse with the car of the other they were saved, this actually was demonstrated in the marriage of Draupadi. The homeless Pandavas after the lac house fire were discovered by Draupadi and were united to recover the lost kingdoms of Draupadi's father and of the Pandavas. Sri Krishna and the Brahmanas are said to be the roots of the great Epic and the Pandavas appeared in the guise of Brahmanas and Sri Krishna upheld their cause. This is the prologue of the great Epic in the marriage of Draupadi.

Sri Krishna is represented in Hindu mythology as having paid the tuition fee of his preceptor sage Sandipon by recovering his lost son from the possession of a devil by the name of Panchajan hiding in the deep ocean and assuming the form of a conch. The conch made out of his bones adorned the hand of Sri Krishna and was used as a warning sound to the fighters of their impending danger on the great field of battle of Kurukshetra. This paying of Sandipon's tuition fee by Sri Krishna by the recovery of his preceptor's son from the Asura Panchajan and the using his bones as the conch of divine love may be said to symbolise the devil's taking possession of the fruit of earthly love or passion. It is redeemed by the divine love of Sri Krishna and this Panchajanya conch of Sri Krishna heralded the marriage of Draupadi with Panchajan (five elements in the persons of the five Pandavas) which may be said to be an emblem of Panchajan or universal love in Draupadi's marriage.

Her marriage represents both the spiritual and material side. So long as earthly passion is the incentive to marriage, wrangling and feud go on as was actually witnessed in the mad fight and thrashing between the suitors and the winners, the Brahmin Pandavas. The marriage did not take place until and unless Sri Krishna came forward blowing his well-known conch declaring the Pandavas had won the girl lawfully, which signifies that Draupadi's marriage was a spiritual marriage and not an ordinary one in human form. The blowing of a conch and wearing a bracelet of conch are found lingering yet as important tokens of a wedding, although marriage has been stripped of much of its spiritual significance as well as of all its romantic associations. People now seek the sanction of law and custom with all their technicalities more than the blessings of Heaven to their matrimonial union. The bonds of matrimony are now worn more lightly than they were before, when women had more freedom and men had less authority over them, when there was no law to break the marriage bond to make another more convenient for enjoyment. It was not then a mere question of loyalty of a woman to a man and *vice versa* or their mutual affection and devotion to their children. It was then the relationship of sexes in the bond of unity on the basis of the moral, religious and spiritual training of Hindu society. It cemented the love and friendship among brothers and their wives and their children, which converted the Hindu home into the precinct of Heaven.

Marital fidelity has been of infinitely varying standard. It has been an exclusive question to bind husband and wife under severe penalty to be only sexually faithful to each other, or a question of a husband's right to dispose of his wife and children in any way he likes. Wife-lending was a form of hospitality. An exchange of wives for prolonged periods is even now a legalised custom among the Eskimos. Plato has denounced the exclusiveness of home in ancient Greece as vigorously as Mr. Bernard Shaw does now. Seneca said that noble women computed their years not by the calendar but by the number of husbands to whom they have read the drama of restoration. The spiritual matrimony with which Draupadi and Yudhishthira were bound weathered many a storm of life and presented to the world the strength and vigour of the blessing of the great Sri Krishna. The Indian Epic is not a love lyric but preaches solemnly that matrimony is not a mere question of strict mutual faithful sexual relationship between man and woman, for its hero and heroine stand on quite a different plane, with a religious and spiritual atmosphere.

In ancient times there were numerous instances where marriages seem to have been connected with the tuition fee of the

preceptor, or the sacrificial fee of the performer or the gift of alms to a great sage who sought the hospitality of a king. There is another significant fact connected with Samkhachura's marriage and death. Tulsī was the name of Samkhachura's wife and she was a noted devotee of Sri Krishna. The idea of chastity of the material world may be analysed in the story of Samkhachura. He had worshipped the God Vishnu and was rewarded with a good wife called Tulsī. The Asura Samkhachura could not be killed on account of the piety and devotion of his wife. At last, it is said, the Asura was killed when God appeared in His form and disengaged Tulsī from her religious austerities. Tulsī found out the fraud practised upon her and was going to curse the God when she was prevailed upon to follow her husband, which speaks of the cremation ceremony with which Draupadī was not identified. The difference between a material and a spiritual marriage is shown in the marriages of Tulsī and Draupadī.

The ancient Hindu system of four stages of life is well-known. One cannot marry before completing his studies at the preceptor's house to his full satisfaction and on payment of his tuition fees. Marriage has been the first entrance to worldly life. The trial of education, conduct and character begins with it. Naturally, the opening scene of the great Epic cannot but be a marriage.

The Mahabharata says that five Gods are reflected in the body of a king and so is ideal Yudhisthira and his relation with his brothers. He is one in five.

"Nobody obeys the king by taking him for a mere man for he is in sooth a great God in five forms according to different occasions. He becomes Agni (fire), Aditya (sun), Vritju (death), Vaisiravana (Kuvera) and Yama (who presides over the day of judgment)." Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LXVIII, verses 40-41.

The five functions of a king are as follows—Virtue, enjoyment, wealth, intelligence and friends and his five materials to increase his dominions are forts, battle, justice, policy and welfare of his subjects (Mbh Shanti Parva, Chapter XCIII, verses 12 & 21). Knowledge, courage, cleverness, strength and patience are man's natural friends and with the help of houses, precious metals, land, wife and friends the wise prosper (Mbh Shanti Parva, verses 84-85, Chapter CXXXIX).

Everything was then thought glorified by its five-fold augmentation, *i.e.*, Panchadevata (five gods), Panchapandavas (five pandavas), Panchayajna (five sacrifices), Panchabhuta (five elements), Panchaprana (five vital airs of existence), Panchopachara (five items or paraphernalia of worship), Panchapita (five fathers), Panchaputra (five sons), and Panchakanya (five daughters). The famous five daughters are Ahalya, Tara, Mandamā, Kuntī and Draupadī, the recital of

whose names are still revered and have efficacy in dispelling sins. It must be said that this fancy for the number five had something to do with the creation of the five husbands of Draupadi. The Indian idol of chastity, Sītā or Sita, did not find a place in the names of the celebrated five daughters of India. The Rāmāyana account is quite clear that a Sita of gold is used in the horse sacrifice of Rāma and the annotator of the Mahābhārata, Nīlkantha, cited Sītā as an example of the technical offence of violating the marriage laws of the day by choosing her own husband, even though at the request of her father, (*Anusasana Parva*, Chapter XLV, verse 4) by implication only, but the Bengali translation of the Mahābhārata by the late Kaliprosana Singha mentioned the name of Sītā openly.

It proves beyond doubt that when the Pāndavas flourished it was an age of a very advanced stage of Hindu society, of a very high standard of religious and spiritual upheaval. Marriage was not a mere question of going round seven steps with Vedic incantations with all sorts of ceremonies. The table of contents of the great Epic says that it assumed the position of the fifth Veda and heavier in weight than all the four Vedas put together. It does not mention the name of Draupadi anywhere among the heroines. The mention of the Drupada Gayitri in the marriage blessings on Arundhatī, the example of ideal chastity, might have some connection with the creation of a character like Draupadi. No one knows what was the actual name of Draupadi as she is known by a number of epithets only. They were Jānāsani, Panchālī and Draupadi. There is no such epithet which can justify her marriage with five husbands.

It of course requires no serious thought or argument to prove the fallacy of anything unprecedented and unheard of in the well-known laws and customs of Aryan civilisation. One knows no more about the marriage of five husbands than about the man in the moon. It is quite possible that the Epic was revised in the days of Buddhist ascendancy in India for this kind of marriage was only found among the Tibetan people. Nowhere in the civilised world has such a marriage ever existed. In spite of all sorts of attempts to obliterate the truth by converting the salient facts into the bone and flesh of a drama and a satire with flights of poetic imagination, the glorious and infallible marks of truth still marked in the ancient customs and laws of Indo-Aryan civilisation of that period as well as the vestiges of truth in the incidents of lives and accounts still remaining in the Epic stare at the interpolations as glaring instances of inconsistencies of the worst nature. They are given in Appendix "A"

The Hindu world has been enlivened with a picture of domestic happiness in the beautiful woods of India in consonance with the bounties of nature as against the luxuries of royalty. The great author kept alive the simplicity of nature with the abstruse points of philosophy, morality and politics in the discussions in which the wise Yudhishthira and beautiful Draupadi were engaged. Here the grandeur of the Mahabharata, its majesty and charm of learned discussions with the wise sages of the day, who honoured the Pandavas by expressing sympathy and encouragement in their great trials of life, are made clear. Draupadi is shown and painted with the task of reading lectures on the duties of a good woman, which made her so divinely beautiful and peerless, so intelligent and resourceful, so dignified and majestic that she was idolised by the Pandavas from the lowest depths of degradation and slavery to which they had been reduced by the fateful dice play, to a queen of a Satyabhama's stamp and calibre, who was found fit to learn at her feet.

Draupadi's mothers-in-law were spoken of as having sons procreated on them by gods above. The idea in its literal sense, that gods like Indra, Yama, Sun, etc., would stoop so low as to have actual connections with the wives of earthly kings is an absurdity besides being a foul calumny. It could only mean that they were raised to the position of goddesses and were so cultured that even the great Vedic gods were anxious to have them. The Svayambara form of the new type of marriage tells a tale of its own. The peerless cultured ladies of India, as presented in the princesses of great royal families, were adored and received homage in the Svayambara ceremony of marriage from the five gods and great princes and kings of note.

Damayanti, Sita and Draupadi's marriages illustrate the form of worship called Gyneolatory in Ancient India. Women from the early Vedic days enjoyed full liberty in every respect and were honoured. They were highly cultured ladies and held in great esteem. Gargi prepared notes for the Veda and openly challenged Yajnavalkya in the royal court of Janaka, and Sulava outdid the reputed royal sage Janaka, mentioned in the great Epic, on the delicate question of Samkhya philosophy and the spiritual aspect of chastity. Many examples of women holding their own in every sphere of life can be cited from the ancient literature of India. The questions of the wife of Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi, form the subject of discussion in the Upanishad with her husband on the crude questions of the spiritual domain of life. There were well-known princesses of India like Rukmini and Subhadra, to possess whom the ideal god and man, Sri Krishna and Arjuna, fought, and they helped in the fight by the side of their lovers in the important task of charioteer-

in; Draupadi was a perennial fountain of joy and love to the Pandavas in their worst miseries, so much so that the ideal mother Kunti speaks of her as being more dear to her than her own sons for the great qualifications and requirements of Draupadi (Udyoga Parva)

Draupadi was dragged most recklessly by Dussahasana, the most wicked brother of Duryodhina, to expose her publicly to avenge if possible the great insult the Kurus suffered in their defeat at the hands of the Pandavas, but Draupadi kept them at bay and released the Pandavas from their slavery by the mere questions of decency and law which exposed the mischievous machinations and foul play of the Kurus in such a conspicuous manner that the blind Dhritarashtra was roused from his stupor to whitewash the whole thing by asking her to take loons from him. The sight of bad omens in the dice hall, when Draupadi was going to be insulted, speaks of the ancient Gynecolatory in India. The poet Milton, inspired with Hindu thought, makes God question Adam if Eve was his god in this manner —

‘This woman whom thou madest to be my help,  
And gavest me as thy perfect gift so good  
So fit so acceptable so divine  
That from her hand I could suspect no ill  
And what she did whiter in it self  
Her doing seem’d to justify the deed  
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat  
To whom the sovereign presence thus replied  
Was she thy God that her thou didst obey  
Before His voice? or was she made thy guide,  
Superior or but equal that to her  
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place  
Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,  
And for thee whose perfection far excell’d  
Hers in all real dignity? adorn’d  
She is indeed and lovely to attract  
Thy love, not thy subjection, and her gifts  
Were such as under government well seem’d  
Unseemingly to bear rule, which was thy part  
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright’

(Paradise Lost, Book 4)

Examples are not wanting in the Mahabharata about Gynecolatory. The fight between Bhishma and Parasurama for Amba is its best illustration. Draupadi was not only idolised by the Pandavas but by one of the heroines of the great Epic, Kunti. Mothers-in-law as a rule do not find something in favour of their daughters-in-law, but in the case of Draupadi it is just the reverse, as will appear from the Mahabharata. The conversation between Kunti and Sri Krishna in the great peace mission may be cited as an example of it. Kunti says that she was stung more by the insult to Draupadi at the dice hall than the loss of



her son's kingdom and everything else. Kunti idolised Draupadi so much and had so exalted an opinion of her wisdom, foresight and forbearance, that in sending a message to her son Arjuna she thought it most important to advise him to follow the advice of Draupadi in all matters.

Bhima, who carried his head high before everybody else and would not bend it before anyone in the world, as will appear from his admonition to Yudhishthira in Bana Parva, his offering to fight a duel with Sri Krishna in the Dandi Parva and his snapping at Arjuna in the dice play hall, was found to be a meek lamb and in a worshipful attitude before Draupadi, and though other Pandavas meekly bore the gross insult to Draupadi at the dice play hall, he failed to restrain his feeling of rage and openly took oaths to avenge the wrong by killing Dussasana and Duryodhana. What Hanumana is in the Ramayana Bhima is in the Mahabharata, and they are said to be sons of the god of Wind and thus brothers. In the roamings and wanderings of the exile life, Bhima offered to carry Draupadi on his shoulder when she became unable to walk. Arjuna, while starting on his mission to learn and practise celestial weapons, saluted Draupadi and received her blessings like a junior. Nakul and Sahadev used to serve her in the menial duties of kneading her feet, etc. Nor can one overlook the most important event in the dice hall, when the Omnipotent God pronounced his wrathful condemnation through the evil omens and portents.

It may be said without any hesitation that Draupadi's universal love was the guiding star of the Pandavas, and in later days developed into the well-known Radha worship of Sri Krishna. After all, the declaration of Draupadi by her name and marriage with the five husbands in the five elements of life are significant signs of Ancient Indian Gynecology. The example of Tilottama in the well-known story of the Sunda and Upsunda fight and destruction makes the point clearer. Draupadi's love and beauty were not in the nature of the ravishing flattery of Tilottama or Sita. The poetry behind the declaration of this novel marriage may mean one thing, that all the Pandavas accepted Draupadi as the ministering angel of their household and empire and they were united with the bright example of her universal love benefited for all equally. They were as subservient to her wishes and directions as a husband generally is to his wife.

Besides, stories are found in the great Epic extolling and glorifying the female virtue of chastity and of other things as embodied in a proverb "It is not a question of reducing a man to a frightened look." The story in question refers to an incident when a successful Brahman of religious austerities got the opportunity

light of a devoted wife whose hospitality he sought. The religious mendicant warned the lady of her conduct, whereupon she cracked cutting jokes at his power of destroying a crane by the sight of his rage. The hair of the mendicant's head stood on end with admiration as to how she had come to know of it. The author seeks to prove that the powers of chastity in a woman are in no way inferior to the Yoga system of Indian philosophy and belittled it that the imprecations and curses still flit before the duties of domestic life, which a dutiful and faithful wife performs and which entitle her to the privilege of knowing everything better than a Yogi by his austerities and religious observances. For such an author of the Indian Epic to clothe ideal Draupadi with the obloquy and infamy of being the common wife of five persons, and that also brothers in the literal sense of the word, is an absurdity which need not be spelt out by elaborate arguments but is self-evident. It would be paying a poor compliment to the great author to think that, after painting such a beautiful and ideal portrait of his heroine Draupadi, he should besmear it with the same brush.

It is well-known that the heads of wise kings like Yudhishthira and Ramachandra were raised with their ideal queens over millions of men and women as models of piety and love. The Epic authors paint the deeds of monsters of power and prosperity in glowing terms to belittle such powers before their heroes and heroines. Their followers laid down their lives on the religious battlefields to bring to justice the recusant rebels and resuscitate virtue, love and religion, the true attributes of Indian honour and glory, and were brought back to life again or given everlasting fame and rest in the region of Heaven above. The old traditions of the Deva and Asura fight in the sacred Vedas, Puranas and Samhitas were followed in the Epics. Naturally it is mischievous and playful to take these high characters of Sita and Draupadi at their face value without going deep into their real meaning and implications. Sita and Draupadi of the two well known Indian Epics have never been the clay models of flesh and blood carried away by passions of love, but they have been worshipped for ages in the heart of hearts of all enlightened people of the world in the spirit of divine love which they demonstrate even now. The incidents of these Epics and their ideals did not stagger or perplex the great sages and kings who had a hand in the making of these important books of religion—a fact which should not be lost sight of in judging characters like Sita and Draupadi. The coterie of literary critics has been full of men like Goldsmith's Village Schoolmaster, who would argue still, and they also to prove what is true in their contentions paint more vividly the ulterior motives behind them.

The Indian Epics are not histories of an individual nation or country but of the religion of the Hindus in close relation with ancient glorious civilisation, and the leading spirits of the day and their respective influences, which shaped the destiny of India at large, are reflected in a glowing and vivid manner. The great historian Mr. Vincent Smith says —

“The political history of India begins for an orthodox Hindu more than three thousand years before the Christian era with the famous war waged on the banks of the Jumna, between the sons of Kuru and the sons of Pandu, as related in the vast Epic known as the Mahabharata. The Epoch of Kali Yuga 3102 B C is usually identified with the era of Yudhishthira and the date of the Mahabharata war ”

It must be said after all that the time for revision of the Epics is long overdue, but this cannot be done without the revival of real Hinduism in India, which is fast disappearing under the all pervading influences of Western education

## THE DIVINE LIGHT IN EPIC.

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Literature throws light on the past. One of the apostles of the Gospel of Revelations said 'The Night is far spent and the Day is at hand'. Without light everything is dark, no one can perceive what is beautiful and marvellous in the creation on the surface of the earth. The proud man cannot shine in the lustre of wealth, in the elegance of dress and in the splendour of equipage, the hero cannot show his prowess to acquire fame and success nor can the opinion or the imagination of the world be expressed in black and white. But there is another light, far more important and glorious than the ordinary one, which displays the rainbow in its various tints, the beauty of the landscape in its true perspective, the feature of divinity in the glorious picture of the awakened birds' hymn of praise to the celestial red morning glow on the blue mantle of the sky, the green field enlivened by flowers and vegetables with bees humming and dancing with appetite, passion and love. The place where this light dwells is the fountain of truth, the human literature of the head and heart.

Light, it is said, is the gift of God and cannot be the exclusive property of anyone. God has given mental faculties to man alone to make use of the divine light if he cares to develop it. No animal has the power of abstraction and concentration and of giving vent to its feelings or recording its experiences in language like man. Animals have some instincts, senses and faculties like man, but they are not capable of progressive improvement, nor are they endowed with conscience. Although they have memory, a sense of humour, gratitude, feelings of love and affection, they can seldom pierce the mystery of creation and realise the Creator through divine light and wisdom. The morning light comes from the East and is lost in the West. This is the divine dispensation and immutable truth.

Civilisation is the compound of good and evil and is the product of time. Sociability is inherent in the nature of man. Circumstances rule the weak but the wise use them as instruments to work out their ends. Affliction has a tendency to sober the mind, and to touch and soften the heart. The two great sources of good conduct are meekness to bear injuries and bounty in relieving necessities. India can boast of these in full measure even now. These are the two great characteristic

assets of Indians which must show that they were not in India as invaders or travellers. All men in their primitive state found impregnable the natural barriers of India. Experience and humility teach modesty and fear, on which, as the hymns of the Veda declare, health of mind depends, and not the enjoyment of luxury or abuse of the senses. Every society in the earliest state consisted of two classes of men—industrial and active members of society and the experienced, who were the guiding stars of the industrial section and were honoured and esteemed. This is the origin of the Aryan and non-Aryan division of the Hindu race, described in the Veda as *Devas* and *Asuras*, respectively. The appellations of *Daityas*, *Danava*, *Rakshasas*, *Pisnacs*, *Sudras* and non-Aryans were merely terms of reproach to make people try and reach a higher standard of life in Aryan civilisation.

In India Vedas, Upanishads, Epics, etc., grew one by one in stages. In the Golden Age of Satya Yuga there was no sorrow, no crime, consequently no rules of conduct, law of punishment and reward and religious institutions were necessary or required. But in the Silver Age, such was not the case. Siva's "Tanda a" dance with small drum (*Damaru*) and Narada's stringed instrument were appreciated as appealing to the head and heart of the people to excite religious sentiment. This first idea of procuring one's sins by singing the *Mantra* and dancing to give pleasure to the ear and excitement to the eyes was then developed. The *Rig Veda* is the first of these. They were sung came to be known by the term *Samans*; they recited in the sacrifices were called *Yajus* and the ritual text to provide against sorcery and the ancient belief in demons of diseases received the name of *Atharva*. The comparison of Brahmins to croaking frogs in their singing at their sacrifices was a method of expression to convey the magical power of bringing rain. Besides the description in the *Yajur* not only gives an important clue to the place where they were composed, but proves the magical powers of the frogs as well.

In the time of the Mahabharata there was no mention of the Vedas found in the Panayaka. The religious of the Mahabharata were not accompanied by any magical power and the Vedas were not the Panayaka. This, to some, shows that the Vedas were composed, apart from their literary composition.

"Brahmin or Brahmin Sam, is a name of the Brahmin in the Mahabharata, but at the same time it is a name of the Brahmin in the Mahabharata."\*

The Vedic scholar Weber gives his views about Krishna-Dvalparyama, Vyasa's identification with the authorship of Brahma Sutra and Vyasa Badarayana, as follows —

"The Vyasa ought really to be identified with Vyasa Badarayana, though this appears at present most very probable." The Epic poetry belongs to two distinct groups, viz., the Itihasa—Purana and the Kavyas. The Ramayana belongs to the Kavya group and the author Valmiki is one of the teachers of Taittiriya-Pratisakhya, and Vyasa that of Taittiriya Aranyaka †

Vyasa and Valmiki were not known in the literary world so much as the authors of these books as they were of the Epics. All credit is due to the researches of Western scholars, who brought to light this important fact. Yet they could not reach any satisfactory solution as to the time and authorship of the Epics nor could they discover the original Epics as they were in the time of the original authors. Dr Hopkins says —

"In fact, the greater Epic, as it stands to day, is so heterogeneous that only the most unhistorical type of mind could view all this heap of good and rubbish as the product of one uniform source. Such a theory has indeed actually been suggested, but it was too fantastic to find support and has awakened only a passing interest. To turn from the finished product to the origin of these two poems, which arose far apart but ended in the same literary environment, of the source of the Ramayana there is little to say, for it is attributed as definitely and regularly to Valmiki as is the Æneid to Virgil, whom the Hindu author preceded by several centuries. Now tradition ascribes the great Epic also, that is, the Mahabharata (which means the great Bharata story and so may be called simply the Bharata), to a certain Vyasa but this Vyasa is a very shadowy person to whom is ascribed also the arrangement of the Vedas and other works, his name meaning merely arranger or disposer ‡

The same writer admits that

"Vyasa, the Epic author and his rival Valmiki, are now gods in some parts of India, as are the heroes of their poems who have many shrines and thousands of worshippers. Finally, the ghosts of 'good' women Satis are regarded as 'new divinities' to cite the expression of the Abbe Dubois, who at the end of the eighteenth century saw some of these unhappy gods in the making§. Krishna is a by name of Vyasa, the author of the Epic (in so far as the arranger of the mass may be called author) who, though not identified with Krishna as Supreme God, is himself divine, and is described as the unborn (that is, the eternal) and ancient one the only son of God born of a virgin, very part virgin, very part (ance) of God (Mbh. xii, 350, 4, 5, 51) ¶"

All these statements are very interesting, coming as they do from an European scholar of great repute, but he should have seen as an unprejudiced scholar what his learned predecessors said about Vyasa

\* Professor Weber's "History of Indian Literature" page 243

† Professor Weber's "History of Indian Literature" pages 191 and 185

‡ Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 68 and 69

§ Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 103-104.

¶ Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," page 159

and his mother. The learned Weber in his note on his book "History of Indian Literature" says —

"Vyasa's mother, Satyawati, is called Salankayanaja, and Panini himself Salanki, the Salankayanas are ranked as Brahmanas among the Vahika in the Calcutta *Scholium to Pan* v 3 114 (bhashyena vyakhyatam) " \*

He should have seen that it is stated in the Mahabharata by the father of Vyasa, Parasara himself, that his son was born out of the boon of Siva. He should have seen that Vyasa and Valmiki were appearing in the scenes of the Mahabharata and the Purana as contemporary men. He should have explained why these authors were given the privilege of ascending to a position of divinity and immortality, as he said. They were Vedic scholars of very great repute and got the divine light and inspiration to compose the Epics, which were the scriptures of the Hindus. The Western scholars, who took so much trouble and spent their energy in studying Eastern languages and Vedas, Upanishads, Aranyaka, Sutras and Epics, are not blessed with the same divine light of Heaven to find out truth and discover the authors and their aims. The Epics are not histories. It is clearly said in the table of contents of the Mahabharata that the mystery behind the writing of Vyasa is so very difficult that even the master of literature, the son of Siva, i.e., Ganesha, took time to understand what he was writing at the dictation of Vyasa. Ganesha is said to be the remover of obstacles and rides on the mouse, the great enemy of books.

Veda and sacrifice, syllables and speech, work and duty, morality and conscience, concentration and meditation and soul and spirit are the mediums through which the ancient Indians lived, moved, and had their being, to see the divine light of Heaven. They were not worshippers of any man or beast, angel or apostle, son or father, Sun or Fire. The quotations of Professor Wilson's Vishnu Purana will serve to explain —

"Omkaara is Vishnu the mighty, the substance of the then Vedas, the lord of speech, and by its enunciation those Rakshasas are destroyed. The Sun is the principle part of Vishnu and light is his immutable essence, the active manifestation of which is excited by the mystic syllable 'OM'. Light effused by the utterance of Omkaara becomes radiant, and burns up entirely the Rakshasas called Mandohas " †

The name of the chief Queen of Ravana is given as Mandodari and the name of the great Ikshaku king is mentioned as Mandhata. Then the seven horses of the Sun's car are interpreted as follows — "The seven horses of the Sun's car are the metres of the Vedas, Gayatri, Vripathi, Ushnih, Jayati, Trishtub, Amishtub and Panktri."

\* Professor A. Weber's "The History of Indian Literature," page 96-(101) footnote

† Professor Wilson's "The Vishnu Purana" page 222, Book VIII, Chapter VIII,

The speculation of the cosmogonic hymns of the Rig Veda is the starting point of the evolution of Hindu religious divine thought, which led to the concept of a Purusha-Visvakarma to the lay, Hiranyagarbha to the valiant, Prajapati to the sacrificers, and Soul to the wise Kapila to play the passive part of a spectator aroused from his slumber of rest by the primeval matter (Prakṛiti) undergoing successive stages of development

In the Rig Veda the fight between Brhta and Indra is recited as well as in Pāṇḍya Samhitā. It establishes the importance of the Pāṇḍya books as recording incidents of a very early Vedic period and not after that of Yajñavalkya, as was wrongly interpreted by Western scholars. The learned Professor Max Muller interpreted the battle of Brhta and Indra as the principal subject of the early mythology with which the Aryan forefathers saw the divine light

"I look upon the sun-rise and sunset, on the daily return of day and night, on the battle between light and darkness, on the whole solar drama in all its details that is acted every day, every month, every year, in Heaven and in earth, as the principal subject of early mythology. I consider that the very idea of divine powers sprang from the wonderment with which the forefathers of the Aryan family stared at the bright (deva) powers that came and went: no one knew whence or whither, that never failed, never faded never died, and were called immortal. Clouds, storms, rains, lightning and thunder, were spectacles, but above all others impressed the imagination of the early Aryans and basied it most in finding terrestrial objects to compare with their ever varying aspect" \*

"Nature in her twofold aspect of daily change, morning and evening, light and darkness—aspects which may expand with those of spring and winter, life and death, nay even of good and evil" The English Rig Veda translation by the learned Professor will convince of the mysticism of the name of the wife of Kasyapa, Aditya, whom, Pargiter found non-Aryan

"Aditi, an ancient god or goddess, is in reality the earliest name invented to express the Infinite, not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse, beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky" †

In the Rig Veda the hymn on the Sun (1st Mandala, 50 Sukta) is addressed as the divine light before the race of Gods and the commentator Savan interpreted Sun as the God Paramatma. The Sun has two mythological twin sons, Asvini Kumars, by Saranyu, the daughter of Visvakarma. The twins are supposed to be the physicians of the gods, who received oblations at the sacrifices through the good

\* Max Muller 'Science of Language,' 1832, Vol II, pages 565, 566

† Professor Max Muller's Rig Veda (translation) Vol I (1869), page 236



offices of sage Cyavana and his father-in-law King Sarjati, referred to in Vedic hymns, 1st Mandala, 51 Sukta. In the same Sukta, Indra is addressed as he who, by killing Vritra, raised the Sun in the sky to be the observed of all observers. He brought forth rain for sage Angira and Atri as well. He used his thunder to save the sacrificer and blessed the sage Bhrigu with wealth and food. The annotator Sayan gives two meanings of Gotra, as he who brought rain or who discovered the stolen cows. Without Aranyakas, without Upanishads, without Epics truth could not be explained. It was Nirada who first conceived the idea of preparing the Bharata Samhita, the source of the two Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. This is clearly mentioned in the Narayana section of the Mahabharata, which makes the connection with Narayana Upanishad etc., mentioned in the quotation before.

That Vyasa and Valmiki belonged to the same time is clear from instances in the Mahabharata as being present at important assemblies, also mentioned in Devi Bhagabata, one of the 18th Puranas of the Hindus\*. In the Devi Bhagabata it is said that by the grace of Narayana through the worship of Saraswati, Valmiki, Vyasa, Bhrigu and Brihaspati saw the divine light of knowledge and wrote their works of instruction to the world. Bharadwaja is mentioned as a pupil of Valmiki and the same Bharadwaja appears in the Mahabharata in a discourse with Bhrigu as his preceptor.

This synchronizes the question of time. Besides, in the Pratishkhyani Sutras of Black Yajus, Valmiki and Bharadwaja are mentioned in the list of teachers†.

The Bharata Samhita consisted of accounts of Gods and Asuras and the teachings of Sanata Kumar, Narada, Narayana, Bhrigu, Bharadwaja and the ancient Kshatriya teachings handed down from Santanu in the discourses of various old kings and priests and in the advice of Bhishma to Yudhishthira, which was first compiled by Vyasa and subsequently enlarged at the instance of Janmejoya I and later on by Yajna valkyas and others. In the old pioneer days of Ancient India finding one's way through life was a very difficult problem. Many roads converged to one point, but not by a straight path. How shall one find his way to the right trail of life and avoid the wrong ones? To show life's correct path was the great task before the Epic writers of India and they did it by vivid examples, so that a traveller of the earth might not come back to the place wherefrom he began his first journey without reaching the goal of bliss and eternity. The great Western poet Shakespeare said —

\* Devi Bhagabata, Canto IX, Chapter V

† Prof. Weber's History of Indian Literature, page 102.

"All that lives must die  
 Passing through Nature to Eternity." \*  
 "Th' re's divinity that shapes our ends  
 Though how v them how so will "†

But Milton said, "Out of our evil seek to bring forth good" Western Sanskrit scholars like Max Muller etc, ascribed the origin of Divine light to Brihti Samhara of the Veda and the Bharata Samhita, but that was not the true interpretation. The great Western scholars should have seen that the Eastern Vedic hymn-makers and sacrificers speak of three lights rather than one light of morning. The Sun and the Moon were made the progenitors of distinct races by the Epic authors and Purans. There were ten Gotras in the ten Aprisuktas of Rik Samhita intended originally each for members of a different Gotra. The Lightstoma (Jyotistoma), Cowstoma (Gostoma) and Life-stoma (Ayustoma) are the three lights or stomas conducive to 'Hindu scriptural Heaven'. By the first the man on earth is firmly established, by the second the gods drove the Asuras away and by the third the gods took possession (Ayuvata) of the Asuras.

The ancient deities and sages of India are mythical. Purans give a long list of their pupils and descendants, but the founders of the families cannot be traced in chronological order. The Epics disclose their identities. Even the learned Pargiter is confused —

"The earliest time at which a real Angirasa Rishi is alleged to have existed was in the reign of Harischandra of Ayodhya when Ajigarta sold his son Sunashapa as a sacrificial victim instead of Rohita, and Ayasa officiated as a priest at the ceremony "‡

There was but one Angiras, the progenitor of the family who described the shrines of India in the Annusasana Parva, Chapter XXV, which speaks of the ancient geography of India and lastly that the people went to the Himalayas, the abode of the gods and sages, to engage themselves in religious meditation in order to catch a glimpse of divine light and to throw off the transient mortal coil there. There is a discourse in the Mahabharata in 85th Chapter, Annusasana Parva of how the sacrifices were offered through fire and how the animal creation—animate and inanimate—was made. And, what is more, it gives the interesting mystery of the god-fathers of sage Bhrigu, Angira and Kabi etc, and their descendants, who were all born out of sacrifices but not by the fiat of will. This the European scholars have not perhaps noticed.

The relevant portion of the translation of the texts will be of interest. It will prove the worthlessness of all sorts of accusations

\* Hamlet Act I, Scene 2      † Act V Scene 2

‡ Prof. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 219

against Brahma, Rudra, Indra and Brihaspati, Bhrigu and others about incestuous and illicit connections. It will also show that the aim of the Epic is to convince the world that God is manifest in His creation. One can feel His presence but cannot see Him with the material eye as an object. There is purpose in God's creation and the earth is not a place to satisfy one's ambitions and senses only. The mere intercourse between male and female does not bring forth children. They were sought by prayers and sacrifices with the true explanation given for their necessity. The gods and sages were not so many products of nature but they fulfilled certain functions of creation. Fire is the true origin of creation and it is in every element and without it even the gods cannot bring forth children. Fire helped Indra in killing Vritra and in the case of Tarakassura the same help was sought, but fire hid himself and a game of hide and seek followed. The frog, elephant, and parrot helped the gods to find where fire was hiding and were cursed by the fire, one after the other. It was in volcano, submarine fire and in the branches of trees which cause wild fire. This truth of existence of fire-animals enlightened gods. The gods were then so ignorant that even animal instincts show the divine light which the gods did not possess. This is the important part of the work of the Epic which could not be done by Vedas and Vedangas, which adore the gods and sages so much in their hymns.

Vashishtha said — "Formerly I also heard this history, O Rama, called Brahma darshana, about the achievement of the Grandfather Brahman who is at one with the Supreme Soul. To a sacrifice performed formerly by that foremost of gods, viz., the Lord of Rudra, O you of great power, who on that occasion had assumed the form of Varuna, there came the ascetics and all the celestials headed by Agni. Brahman was pouring libations on the fire. While thus engaged, the Grandfather became worked up with desire. As soon as the seed came out, he took it up with the sacrificial ladle and poured it as a libation of clarified butter, O delighter of the Bhrigus, with the necessary Mantras, on the burning fire. From that seed, Brahman of great power caused the four orders of creatures to come into being. That seed of the Grandfather was endued with the three qualities of Goodness, Darkness, and Ignorance. From that element in it, which represented the quality of Goodness, sprang all mobile creatures gifted with the principle of action. From the element of Ignorance in it, sprang all immobile creatures. The quality of Goodness, however, which lived in that seed, entered both kinds of existence. That quality of Goodness is of the nature of Light. It is eternal and of it is unending Space. In all the creatures the quality of Goodness is present and is at one with that light which shows what is right and what is wrong. When the seed of Brahman was thus poured as a libation on that sacrificial fire, there came from it, O powerful one, three beings into existence. They were three male persons, gifted with bodies that partook of the nature of the circumstances from which they respectively originated. One arose first from the fire (called Bhrigu) and hence he passed by the name of Bhrigu. A second came from the burning charcoals and hence he passed by the name of Angiras. The third originated from a heap of extinguished charcoals and

he passed by the name of Kavi. It has been already said that the first came out with flame issuing from his body and hence he was called Bhrigu. From the rays of the sacrificial fire originated another called Marichi. From Marichi (afterwards) sprang Kashyapa. It has been already said that from the (burning) charcoals originated Angiras. The dwarf he is called Valibhilyas originated from the blades of Kushagrass spread on in that sacrifice. From the same blades of Kusi grass, O you of great power, originated Atri. From the ashes of the fire originated the twice born Rishis, viz., the Vaikhanishas, endued with penances and given to Vedic learning and all of excellent qualities. From the eyes of Agni originated the twin Ashwins endued with great beauty. At last from his ears, originated the Prajapatis. The Rishis originated from the pores of Agni's body. From his sweat originated Chhandas, and from his strength originated Mind. Therefore Agni has been said to be all the celestials in his individual self, by Rishis endued with Vedic learning guided by the authority of the Vedas. The pieces of wood that keep alive the flames of Agni are considered as the Months. The juices the fuel yields form the fortnights. The liver of Agni is called the Day and Night, and his fierce light is called the Muhurtas. The blood of Agni is considered as the source of the Rudras. From his blood originated the gold-hued celestials called the Maistradevatas. From his smoke originated the Vasus. From his flames originated the Rudras also the (twelve) Adityas of great effulgence. The Planets and Constellations and other stars that have been set in their respective orbits in the sky are considered as the (burning) charcoals of Agni. The first Creator of the universe declared Agni to be Supreme Brahma and Eternal, and the giver of all desires. This is, indeed, a mystery.

'After all these births had taken place Mahadeva who had assumed the form of Varuna (for his sacrifice) and who had Iavana for his soul, said — 'This excellent sacrifice is mine. I am the Grahapati in it. The three beings that first originated from the sacrificial fire are mine. Forsooth, they should be considered as my children. I know this, O god who ranges through the skies. They are fruits of this Sacrifice.' Agni said — 'These children have originated from my limbs. They have all depended upon me as the cause of their being. They should, therefore, be considered as my children. Mahadeva in the form of Varuna has erred in this matter.' After this, the Master of all the worlds the Grandfather of all creatures, viz., Brahman, then said — 'These children are mine.' The seed which I poured upon the sacrificial fire was mine. I am the performer of this sacrifice. I poured on the sacrificial fire, the seed that came out of myself. He who has planted the seed always enjoys the fruit. The principal cause of these births is my seed. The celestials went to the Grandfather and having bowed their heads to him and joined their hands in respect, they said to him — 'All of us, O illustrious one, and the entire universe of mobile and immobile creatures, are your offspring, O sire, let Agni of burning flames, and the illustrious and powerful Mahadeva who has, for this sacrifice, assumed the form of Varuna, have their wish.'

'At these words, although born of Brahman, the powerful Mahadeva in the form of Varuna, the king of all aquatic creatures received the first-born one, viz., Bhrigu effulgent as the Sun, as his own child. The Grandfather then intended that Angiras should become the son of Agni. Knowing the truth, the Grandfather then took him as his own son. Busy with procreating creatures for peopling the earth, Bhrigu, who is considered as a Prajapati, thence came to be called as Varuna's offspring. Gifted with every prosperity, Angiras passed as the offspring of Agni, and the celebrated Kavi came to be known as the child of Brahman himself. Bhrigu and Angiras, who had originated from the fire and the charcoals of Agni respectively, became the procreators of extensive races and tribes in the world. Indeed these

three, viz, Bhrigu and Angiras and Kavi, considered as Prajapati, are the progenitors of many races and tribes. All are the children of these three.

"Know this, O powerful hero. Bhrigu begot seven sons all of whom became equal to him in merits and qualities. Their names are Chyavana, Vajrashirshan, Suchi Urva, Shukra, that giver of boons Vibhu and Savana. These are the seven. They are children of Bhrigu and are hence Bhargavas. They are also called Varunas on account of their ancestor Bhrigu having been adopted by Mahadeva in the form of Varuna. You belong to the race of Bhrigu. Angiras begot eight sons. They also are known as Varunas. Their names are Vrihaspati, Utathya, Payasya, Shanti, Dhira, Virupa, Samvarta, and Sudhanwan the eighth. These eight are considered also as the children of Agni. Freed from every evil, they are devoted to knowledge only. The sons of Kavi, who was adopted by Brahman himself, are also known as Varunas. Eight in number all of them became progenitors of races and tribes. Auspicious by nature, they all knew Brahma. The names of the eight sons of Kavi are Kavi, Kavya, Dhishnu, Ushanas endued with great intelligence, Bhrigu, Viraja, Kashi and Ugra knowing every duty. These are the eight sons of Kavi. By them the whole world has been peopled. They are all called Prajapatis, and they have procreated many offspring. Thus, O chief of Bhrigu's race, has the whole world been peopled with the children of Angiras, and Kavi and Bhrigu. The powerful and Supreme Lord, Mahadeva in the form of Varuna which he had assumed for his sacrifice had first, O learned Brahmana, adopted both Kavi and Angiras. Hence, these two are considered as of Varuna. After that the eater of sacrificial libations, viz, the god of fire, adopted Angiras. Hence all the children of Angiras are known as belonging to the race of Agni.

"The Grandfather Brahman was formerly propitiated by all the deities who said to him, 'Let these lords of the universe save us all. Let all of them become progenitors of offspring. Let all of them become endued with penances. Through your favour, let all these rescue the world. Let them become procreators and extenders of races and tribes and let them increase your power. Let all of them become thorough masters of the Vedas and let them be performers of great deeds. Let all of them be friends to the divine cause. Indeed, let all of them become gifted with auspiciousness. Let them become founders of extensive races and tribes and let all of them be great Rishis. Let all of them be gifted with great penances and let all of them be devoted to high celibacy. All of us, as also all these, are your offspring, O you of great power. You, O Grandfather, are the Creator of both the celestials and the Brahmanas. Marichi is your first offspring. All these also that are called Bhargavas are your progeny. Looking at this fact, O Grandfather, we shall all help and support one another. All these shall, thus multiply their progeny and establish your self at the beginning of each moon after the universal destruction.' Thus addressed by them, Brahman, the grandfather of all the worlds, said to them,—So be it! I am pleased with you all!—Having said so to the celestials, he proceeded to the place he had come from. This is what took place in days of Yore in that sacrifice of the great Mahadeva, that foremost one of all the celestials, in the beginning of creation, when he for the purposes of his sacrifice had assumed the form of Varuna. Agni is Brahman. He is Pashupati. He is Sarva. He is Rudra. He is Prajapati. It is well known that gold is the offspring of Agni."\*

All these are nothing less than miracles. No one witnessed the acts of creation. The presumed laws and the miracles are exactly on the same level. There is nothing to prove that what cannot be accom-

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\* Professor M. N. Dutt's "A prose English translation of the Mahabharata" Anushasana Parva, Chapter LXXXV, pages 186—189, Slokas 57—147.

plished by man can be done by the Creator Himself if He wishes to do so to accomplish His end. The use of the miracle is to manifest the divine power of the Creator against the law of nature. It is designed to condemn the scepticism of unbelievers by direct proof of extraordinary things which are not capable of being done by anyone else but the Creator Himself. No science or knowledge can comprehend or explain its causes. The use of the miracle is to manifest the divine power and wisdom, to confirm the faith of the God's devoted apostles and followers. There is a miracle in every book of religion of the world and men like Locke, Chatham, Newton and a host of other learned men believed them and wrote on the subject.

Faith creates God, hymns follow. The Vedic hymn-makers saw the light of Heaven in the Rainbow in the sky in the hymn of Indra\*. In this hymn the Asuras Britta and Sambara are referred to as being killed by Him. It mentions the seven colours in the Rainbow and the seven rivers of Indra. The divine light comes from the rays of the sun, the colours of the Rainbow, wisdom of patriarchs, sages and sounds of voice, which are all seven. Fire is represented as a horse, as it is in the Mahabharata Pousya Parva. There are two hymns on the horse in the Rig Veda (Mandala 1, 162 and 163 Suktas). In the hymn of the Rig Veda, 2nd Mandala, 38 Sukta, on the sun, the reference of weaving girls day and night is made exactly as is found by Utanka in Pousya Parva. This proves the study of the Rig Veda by him. This is the divine light which the Rig Veda throws and is reflected in the Epic Mahabharata. The Veda is said to have come from the mouth of the flames of the fire and received the name of Jataveda and, what is more, it is in the stomach of every living animal which digests the food it takes and that is another cause of that name of the fire.

The fire seems to be the chief creative principle. It is only reasonable that when force of will is combined with the principle of energy the principle of creation begins in the sacrifice. The parents sacrifice their own interests for the sake of their children. There is a sort of fire which consumes their own self-interest although the son is born in the flames of passion. Wish is the father of the son, and the sacrifice demonstrates the creative principle on earth. But when, beguiled by selfish love of sway, parents contend with sons, they fight. The infatuated fool disowns the author of the creation and feels no compunction in killing dear ones for the sake of possession of the earth. In the case of the Heavenly Father, who is not seen like earthly parents, there seems to be no obligation on the part of men, who revolt

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\* Rig Veda 2nd mandala, 12 Sukta.

easily without any rhyme or reason when anything stands in their way.

A man's heart devises his own way. God is far above all that is earthly. He neither instigates anybody to commit any sin or crime nor does he punish any transgressor himself with his own hands. The hardening of heart and mind follow when there is no check. The work of blind passion creates enormities of crime which give courage to the weak to combine and rise against the powerful. The cruel persecutions of a tyrant create a sort of horror against the perpetrator and the crime in the minds of people—which the human punishment of law cannot do. This is the purpose of the Indian Epics, *viz.*, to teach by example to shun the wicked and to emulate the good. The intelligence of a cultured people can invent more powerful weapons than the boon of God Brahma or the sacrifice. Sacrifice is not only the origin of creation in Hindu mythology but of granting boons to the Asuras, who performed it by all sorts of penances for that purpose.

Both the Asuras and the Devas indulged in the sacrifices and received boons. Brahma is sacrifice and it is he who always gave the boons to the great Asuras. When their persecutions became very great and unbearable, the Devas, headed by Brahma (sacrifice) approached Vishnu or Narayana to save creation from the exactions of the powerful tyrants. The powerful Ravana, Kartavirja-Arjuna, etc., were all killed by Rama and Parasurama, a man and a sage, through the divine dispensation which is nothing less than a miracle. The vast army of Demons after all were defeated by an army of gorillas and monkeys, the thousand hands of Kartavirja-Arjuna could not resist the power of two arms with an axe. This is the symbol of the power of God before the imagery of human power. The mere numerical strength of an army and the good generalship of well-known conquerors fail to accomplish even trifling things against the will of the Omnipotent Father.

The Epic conception of God is not that of the hymn-maker of the Vedas or of the learned sages of the Upanishad Philosophy, Aranyaka, etc., or the performer of the Vedic rites or sacrifices, but it is that of one meditative God Narayana who combined the Hindu trinity of gods and Vedas into one syllable, "Om," which is sufficient for the purpose of meditation and concentration of mind to hold communion with God above and the soul within.

The spirit of God is not discerned by every man. The majority of men are wholly blind with passion and selfishness. Science and philosophy seek the truth, culture and knowledge realise it when found, but

the soul of the man only can feel, it awakened, the communication and relation of the soul in the universe in common within him. No fear or terror of thunder can deter or blind the soul holding communion with the absolute soul of the vast universe. It confers such a strength as will conquer everything before it, however hard and difficult. A miracle is performed by Him at every instance. The great sage, who was reputed to have swallowed the ocean, could not kill Ravana but advised Rama to do it. He was then far too advanced to think of playing the demonstrator in the moral physical laboratory of the world.

One cannot get into the very heart-life of even a beloved and intimate friend and relation but one can touch and feel the most delicate omniscient Being with every thought, motion and desire. He catches minutely and accurately everything that is in the soul of His beloved devotee—this is the Divine light! What joy, peace and victory dwell in the heart of one whose troubles, worries and fears are all dissolved in the great ocean of Heavenly love and faith, where everything is but infinite and everlasting joy, peace and victory. God's angels have charge of those who have faith in Him and there were the seven apostles in the different cycles of time who were not ordinary mortals, the patriarchs of ancient Hindu Society that their births and spans of life would be like that of ordinary mortals.

Even now in India there are thousands of Yogis residing in the cold icy mountains of the Himalayas living for two or three centuries in the same state on the summits, which scientific men with all their modern appliances have repeatedly failed to do. Instances are not wanting of their performing wonderful feats which cannot even be dreamt of by ordinary mortals. There are instances of Yogis living many days beneath the surface of the earth or under water without being dead or decomposed, or even sick. The Epics demonstrate by their various examples of glorious kings and wise priests that the world's applause is a fleeting dream. The mighty kings of matchless prowess and sovereignty who traced their lineages to the Sun and the Moon now only linger in the hardly believed tales.

It is certain that the instinct of honour which is fostered in the breast of man is strongly appealed to when one is conscious of being nobly or heavenly born. This is the idea of the heaven-born sons connected with sacrifices and duties. Bhishma, who pays the debt of duty, has a right to relate his experiences. The arduous penances that have been practised by him obstructing fate for countless years drew the attention of the age as a marvel and invested him with the name of Debabrata, dying at will. By reading or hearing the Epics people



realise the fate of ambition, selfishness and glory, so that these may not influence them to do wrongs, especially when all will perish like their predecessors, the glorious accounts of whose actual accomplishments are now mere nursery tales. Such is the fate of ambition and glory in the earth below. The infatuated fool who calls the earth his own and fights for it, should see the results of the past in the fates of the heaven-born heroes.

One must realise that it is not worthy to waste energy and life for the possession of wealth or gratification of the senses, but one must try to conquer self and think of sacrificing one's own pleasures of the senses for the amelioration of suffering humanity. This is the gospel of divine light that the Epics preach to the world. The Epics, if rightly understood, are not sectarian books of religion as the Western scholars took them to be. The attribute of God Narayana in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in the persons of Rama and Krishna against Parasurama and Balarama, who are called the incarnations of Vishnu, if rightly understood, will mean not only cultured men of divine energy and intellect, but will also speak of the difference between the Vedic ideal of Vishnu and his incarnation. In the hymn of the Rig Veda it is clearly stated by the commentator to be so in the case of the two great Pandava heroes, Bhima and Arjuna, whose godfathers were Wind and Indra.

Happiness springs from the act. The main purpose of life is action and not quality. Though manners spring from men's qualities, their happiness and misery depend on their own actions. God is not in any way responsible for this as He has given free will to man. Nobility is the virtue of a family of honourable descent and is in all nations greatly esteemed. Masses are led by fear. Poverty is transparent; riches are but a cloak for ills. Man is made of body, soul and spirit. It is good for a man to die before he has done anything worthy of death. He who commits no crime requires no law. It is not the counsel but the speaker's worth which gives weight to his speech. It is for this reason heaven's light descended from the mouth of the God Narayana himself to Narada, the divine minstrel, first in the Bharata Samhita, the source of the two Epics of India. Evil counsel is swift in its march and the majority of men are wicked as they have not the enjoyment of virtuous conduct. To make them feel the effects of virtue and vice, not by their own experience but by the fates of others, is wholesome and necessary. This is the task of the Indian Epics.

In the Epics the mention of law, customs, usages, and their growth and changes, give the world the vision of right and wrong with the change of time and ideals. The various examples and vicissitudes of life of various contending parties of Devas and Asuras, kings and priests,

brothers and cousins of ruling dynasties, good and bad, virtuous and wicked, give an interesting insight into one God and to form an ideal life for the mortal in the sea of troubles to bear the hardships and sufferings of life in the so-called vale of tears. The divine light illumines the dark pages of destiny and makes man full of courage and energy to overcome the greatest difficulty with coolness and forbearance. This is what the ideal example of Yudhisthira, Rama, Kunti, Sita and Draupadi teach. It is in the Vedas upheld by Vedic sacrifices and ceremonies and by the law of the Hindu Narada, Bhṛigu, Sukra, Bharadvaja in the Upanishads and in the Epics.

The Great Epic Mahabharata declared in the opening stanzas of the first book of the first Parva is an Epic, but a Samhita, a Purana, a history, a poem, a treatise, a book of social, moral, political and religious institutions and Upanishad. The Ramayana, on the other hand, is a poem observing the rules of grammar, etc. There is also a clear mention as to the origin of the name "Mahabharata"\* in the history of the family of the glorious Bharata King Santana. Dr Hopkins' views on the inter-connection of the two Epics' final growth is very interesting.

In regard to the final growth of each it may be said at once that neither Epic was developed quite independently of the other. The later Ramayana implies the Mahabharata as the latter Mahabharata recognizes the Ramayana of Valmiki. It is not then a question of absolute separation but only of the length we may go in separating them. Long before there was any allusion to Valmiki's Ramayana, the base of the great Epic, the substance of the Bharata Katha is recognized in Hindu literature, while the latest addition to the great Epic refers to Valmiki himself as a man who is one that is who is already famous, *vacas te geyam bhavisyati*, xiii. 18-20. Between these extremes lies the Ramayana. The Ramayana recognizes Janamejaya as an ancient hero and knows Kurus and Panchalas and the town of Hastinapur (ii. 6-13). The story of Pandus, the great of the present Epic is presumably later than the story of Rama, the former everywhere recognizing the latter as an ancient tale. We must therefore on these data make the following distinctions:—1. The story of Rama is older than the story of the Pandus. 2. The Pandu story has absorbed the Bharata Katha. (3) The Bharata Katha is older than Valmiki's poem. There is hardly a field in which Vyasa and Valmiki do not echo the same words. General descriptive epithets and phrases that paint the effect of grief and anger or the appearance of city and forest; the aspect of battle and attitude of warriors with short characterization of weapons and steeds are all as frequent as the mass of similes found in both Epics in the same words. In the last category, identical similes are drawn from gods, men, animals and physical phenomena. Again both poets as shown above, use the same phrases of speech as they do also of noises, and of the course of time, and finally there are many didactic verses almost or quite the same in both Epics. In the list of parallels given elsewhere I have incorporated such examples as I have noticed of identical or nearly identical phrases and verses."

\* First book, Chapter 99, Verse 48, Mbh.

† Dr Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 59.

‡ Dr Hopkins' "The Great Indian Epic" page 64.

§ Dr Hopkins' "The Great Indian Epic" page 71.

The number of Slokas in the Bharata Samhita or the Mahabharata of 24000 Slokas coincides with the number of Slokas of the Ramayana. Professor Weber's views are as follows —

'Now this allegorical form of the Itihasya certainly indicates, *a priori*, that this poem is later than the war-part of the Mahabharata, and we might fairly assume, further, that the historical events upon which the two works are respectively based stand to each other in a similar relation.'\*

The whole of the 7th book Uttarakanda Ramayana and all the episodes in the first book of Ramayana contain mention of Narayana as the God divine, as it is in the Mahabharata. One very important fact is that Uttarain Charita represents the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana and not what Western scholars found to be the original Ramayana (the first six books).

Western scholars all thought that the Mahabharata related to the battle of Kurukshetra and to the Pandavas or Panchalas and Kurus, the two fighting factors of India. The Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, however, were not the account of battles of conquering heroes but a series of revelations in a connected link of instruction to the world with the mythology of the Devas and Asuras and the spiritual and moral instructions in the discourses of great men of the past. It was not a drama or Kavya in the beginning but an entertaining piece of literature, meant as a sort of instruction at the royal sacrifices on the distinct days of a sacrifice to distinct classes of people or on a distinct subject. The Bharata Samhita is the first Epic of India, sung by Narada in honour of Narayana after the Vedic period. In Kadambari, Narada's daughter is said to have followed the line of the father.

The Sanskrit literature, Kavya and Drama, of later date than the Epic, give better ideas of things of the past than the fertile imaginations of the cultured scholars, who tried to establish connection between the West and the East by all sorts of theory and dogma. The parallelism might be found striking and clear, but not always justifying a bold and sweeping conclusion. The people of India were never punished for the fault of their king, as happened in Egypt. The cruel persecutions of a tyrant, described in the Epic, create a sort of disgust and horror against the crimes he practised. Brittasura and Ravana are called a Dasyu and a demon, respectively. The enormities they practised served the purpose of awakening a revulsion against them by prompting the soul within. This cannot be produced by law, punishment or war. This is the important function of the ancient Epic, to bring into life and operation the

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\* Professor Weber's "History of Indian Literature," page 192

dormant faculties of conscience and energies of the mass. The general depravity of the human mind and its propensity to do wrong to others are evident. The natural man does not inhale the breath of God ordinarily. The poet Milton sang —

\*\*\* \*\*\* innocence that as a veil  
Had shadov'd them from knowing ill was gone  
Just confidence and native righteousness,  
And honour from about them naked left  
To guilty shame (Paradise Lost IV. 104)

The Epics and Dramas educate the mass in the progress of time. The Drama well begins to the Epic. The Ramayana speaks of Rama and Ravana in the war the allies of Rama were beasts of the forest headed by sages and Ravana's brother, who was good and wise. Both the Epics represent Sankhya and Yoga philosophy and instances are not wanting of sages and pious kings being translated to heaven, earth and internal regions or transformed into beasts for any omissions or commissions of by causes. The reconstruction of the Vedic religion on the basis of minimist theory is the work of time. All gods are derived from the memory of greatness. Drama is the outcome of the revelation imparted to the spirits of the dead and the performance was meant to gratify the dead. The actor loses, is damned. This tells on the mass imagination more than anything else. It is consequently a victory on one side and death on the other.

Everyone imagines others happy and is anxious to exchange his own state with theirs. Religion reversed this corruption of mind born of lazy habits. This state of things is more or less due to youthful excursions of the senses without restraint, which culture and education alone can confer. Knowledge alone can sober down the self-sufficiency and presumption of man. Examples better than precepts educate man in changing the habits of the mass. Ignorance induces one to follow the occupation in which one is born and bred and one's vision is circumscribed and narrowed down. One is afraid to move out of the rut. This narrow state of things the Ramayana depicts when Rama killed a Sudra for practising Yoga, but no such thing is found in the Mahabharata. This speaks of the age of the Ramayana, if the story is not an interpolation.

However, Epic poetry stands at the head of the old Sanskrit literature and is divided into two distinct groups. Purana and Kavya. The Yajur Veda is distinguished by the White and Black schools, containing as it does the formulae for the entire sacrificial ceremonies except Soma sacrifice. In the Aranyaka of the White Yajur Asvala is mentioned as the Hotar of Janaka, the king of Videha, and his Sutra is

called Asvalayana Sutra. Saunaka is said to have destroyed his own Sutra in favour of his pupil Asvala. There are numerous examples of the Ayana at the end of the Author's name, viz; Saundilayana, Latayana, Salankayana, Badarayana, Kalyayana, etc. This gives a clue to the time of the Ramayana's composition if not the name of the author himself. The Ramayana, at the end of the table of contents of the first six books, is clearly mentioned as Ravana Badha Kavya and not Ramacarita, as is mentioned in the Mahabharata by Bhagava and by Valmiki himself in Uttarakanda, 84 Canto

The Uttarakanda Ramayana gives the installation of Rama and his Asvamedha sacrifice with the true incidents and his character fully depicted, which brought tears to the eyes of Rama's brother. It will be seen that Jaimini Bharata relates only Yudhishthira's great Asvamedha sacrifice and the Asvamedha Parva. It in fact describes the character of the Pandavas and their enemies in relation to virtue and vice. The fall of the Pasupat cult and rise of the Narayana cult is the aim of the Bharata Samhita. In the Brahmana of the White Yajus and Annusasana Parva, Tandya is mentioned as a teacher of the Pasupat cult and Ravana was his follower. Vyasa and Parasara belonged to the Pasupat cult, though descended from Vasistha. It was when Siva could not remove the affliction of separation from his son Suka, and Siva's boon of seeing the spectre of his departed son was all the more unbearable, that Vyasa sought Narada's help and was relieved. Narada's lesson to Vyasa's son made him ascend to heaven in person. Vyasa was eventually immortalised as being the author of the Mahabharata. His impartial and successful exposition of the Narayana cult made the world believe him to be an incarnation of Narayana. Benares was the centre of the Pasupat cult and there Vyasa's followers established the Narayana Murti, now worshipped as Adikeshaba, and Vyasa was idolised at the Palace Ghat of the Maharajah of Benares at Ramnagore, where people even now worship him.

In Uttarakanda it is said that the brother of Rama visited Cyavana and Valmiki. They were not different men but had different names in different places according to the changes in the modes of life. Cyavana was practising Yoga when anthills grew round him. Sarjati's daughter opened his eyes by striking them with a stick or her hairpin out of curiosity when she accompanied her father's hunting expedition. To relieve the king's equipages of an attack of disease by the curse of the sage, the king had to marry his daughter to the sage. This transgression on the part of Cyavana made him leave the place of his religious practices. It was when an incident having a close resemblance to this past experience occurred that he uttered the first Sloka in

penitence and grief—which was the nucleus of the Ramayana. He not only utilised the warning himself but wanted to leave a lasting warning to the world behind him in the immortal drama Ravana-Badha Kavya or the Ramayana, not to waste energy over the gratification of the senses like Ravana, who became so great a tyrant by the boon of Brahma or sacrifice.

Ravana lived a long life, enjoyed all that the earth, wealth and the gods could give, yet he was not happy and satisfied. His desire grew more and more. He envied the happiness of the exiled Rama in the possession of his beloved and devoted wife, Sita, in the forest. Ravana, with a thousand beauties of the world, found himself poorer without Sita as his own. The great author of the Ramayana Kavya wanted to prove that the mere possession of wealth, all the requisites of enjoyment and sovereignty of the world cannot make a man happy in the true sense of the word. Dramatists like Bhābhūti followed Valmiki to enrich the tendermost part of the human heart left untouched by him. Others followed to test the fidelity of Sita by placing the false severed head of her lord before her as killed by Ravana; but even that did not succeed. The more the tyrant was foiled in his attempt to seduce her the more miserable he grew, in spite of the array of beauties he had collected and enjoyed in his long reign. It was for this that Ravana was already killed with sorrow before being killed by the arrow of Rama. The curse of Rama stood in the way of Ravana's having his desire by using force. It is clearly stated in the Uttarakanda that Sita was looked after like a mother during her captivity (Canto 46, verse 54). Rama hallowed Sita by the fire ordeal, yet the calumny touched the pure Sita and for this Rama proved to the world that unhappy is the head that wears a crown, as he cannot please everybody.

The two Epics stand on different footings altogether, the Mahabharata is so vast and varied that its strata cannot be dealt with properly by the short mention of a few relevant points.

"That the whole people should be taught and trained  
So shall licentiousness and black resolve  
Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take  
Their place, and genuine piety descend  
Like an inheritance from age to age "

—WORDSWORTH



and rush headlong, irrespective of evil consequences. It was the result of not being schooled properly

None can foresee that the good pursued is not an evil in disguise. This the Epic describes in Rama leaving Sita to hunt a golden deer in the woods, Yudhishthira being blind to the mischievous machinations of the Kuru; and plying dice at the Kuru Court on an invitation and staking and losing everything there. It is a tax on greatness. It is concomitant with greatness, just as satires and invectives formed the essential parts of Roman triumphs along with the arches below which the victorious army passed in glory with a chain of prisoners of war. Jealousy and suspicion are the outcomes of selfish enjoyments and passion is the root of all earthly troubles and miseries. There are characters regarded as the special features of human and divine love. Universal love cannot be realised without attaining the state to which Yudhishthira arose and which Draupadi administered.

### Sri Krishna

The earthly scenes which make the relations of this world so sweet and loving are really dear and memorable. In actual life very profound relations are often perpetuated in memory. The preceptor or the parents who interweave their influence with the daily routine of existence can hardly be forgotten. To observe him, imitate him and love him was the best means of consecrating his connection. In every age a man of intelligence must guide the masses. All great men came out of darkness without knowing their future. Time is so sure a destroyer that anything rescued from its dissolving touch is looked upon in the light of a trophy. One gazes upon the religion of one's forefathers with its history and philosophy, its growth and advancement which have rivetted the attention of the greatest scholars of the world, with a feeling of great reverence. The inherent grandeur of the philosophy of love and religion is imbedded in the life and history of Sri Krishna. The poetry of many unrivalled geniuses, the sublimity and majesty of their conceptions, have attracted the attention and admiration of many ages and enriched their literature with new angles of vision. Brilliant men shine like the lustre of lightning which dispels the clouds that obscure the sun behind them.

Love is the creative principle in the material world. It is a divine attribute. Matter is sublime and beautiful when it is significant of mind, i.e., where pleasure is subordinated to the moral purposes of one's being. Death is the only reality in life to beasts and human beings who are engrossed in the enjoyments of polishing their manners and disguising their faults instead of reforming the heart by following in the footsteps of great men or glorious sages. It is quite easy for men and



women to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws, but there were no such false beings in Ancient India. Not only men and women but even their Vedic gods gladly revealed their sins and shameful conducts and performed penances or made expiations. Ancient Hindu Laws were not made to punish evil transgressors, but Epics and Puranas describe the people's self-imposed punishments for their trivial and technical offences. It was for this that kings often overlooked such transgressions which, at a later age, came to be construed as meaning that the Brahmans were exempt from punishment. When resentment against sin and conception was recognised to be legal, the great deeds of men in the lofty chronicles of bygone days were used by great poets and rhapsodists to present to the world the ideas and theory of ancient chivalry, honour, virtue and religion, and the great ideal man, Nara or Narayana, was worshipped not in the sacrifices of Vedic formulae but in the heart of hearts of India for his unique character of wisdom, learning, observances, love, humanity and heroism.

When the conception of a philosophic godhead of Narayana was not easily realised and understood by men, Sri Krishna was found to be just the suitable God for the purpose. Sri Krishna is not an image of meekness nor does he represent the submissive love of Jesus Christ. What is there in the nature of a loving infant that breathes of heavenly simplicity and love? Its trustfulness makes a child hide its face in the breast of its parent and clasp its little arms around her neck. Commonness of enjoyment is the secret of brotherly love. This is the law of evolution of the divine purpose in the history of creation and religion. The theology of love is the logical complement of the theology of fear. A child does not hesitate for a moment to trust everyone in the love of God who has made every creature on earth mutually trustful and dependent upon mutual labour. Every one trusts himself and his dear ones to the laws and organisations. Dangers, injustices, asperities and uncertainties all disappear before the God-illuminated trust. The law of trust permeates the animal kingdom and faith rules the human heart. Faith and want are the first requisites to put the mind in a fit state to receive spiritual help from above. The material world claims but a tacit submission. The spirit of God, growing with divinity, would be impervious to the love of wealth and power.

Love alone gives the power of perception of all spiritual realities. Prayer, sacrifice or worship without true love, either to an abstraction or to an idol of flesh and blood, cannot make one realise the love of God or make one advance a step forward in the spiritual domain. Prayer without love and knowledge is nothing less than a farce. Faith and love are the essence of effective prayer. Self-knowledge is the first

stepping stone to knowledge of God. The devotee must be eager to know what are the attributes of God and where He is. The eternal God is not to be realised in the way a man or a woman think of one mother in the pursuit of selfish love and motive. The Indian Epic demonstrates the ways of God and man and their mutual relations in the sphere of life and existence and nothing else. If the truth be told, Sri Krishna is neither a redeemer like Christ nor a philosopher like Kapila, nor a prophet in the true sense of the word. He is the man of action and spirit showing the world the power of universal love in the material, religious and spiritual world. He is not a practitioner of Vedic sacrifices nor the propounder of any religion or theory of philosophy, as aimed at in Gita and Upanishad, Vedanta and Samkhya.

Geometrical truths are discovered through axioms and postulates and scientific discoveries are made through observation and knowledge, but historical facts are elucidated through progressive civilisation, customs, manners and religion. Philosophy and theology are the outcome of culture and devotion. The Yoga system gives prominence to application, but Samkhya devotes itself to analysis and close connection and Vedanta and all other philosophies are mere developments of Yoga and Samkhya philosophies. Epic literature makes the dry subjects of all these philosophies and theology interesting and attractive by examples and scrutiny, making due observations for clearing up difficult questions. Ancient India was independent and each man and woman was also. The duty did not come to be realised by the primitive male or female. Necessity required certain things to be observed for their very existence. One must eat, drink and sleep. Nature wants it and not God. It must have struck the great author of the Samkhya philosophy when he said the creation depended more upon nature than upon God. Nature makes one feel the need and then supplies it. Observation and intelligence guide one to utilise everything. Nature provides and improves upon it. The bird makes its nest and feeds its young. Animals and birds have instincts and some have intelligence. Domesticated animals display more aptitude for it.

Man owes everything to his brain or intention. Christians believe that God created man after his own image, but the Hindus do not. Hindus think that between God and man there can be very little resemblance. One man is dependent upon another, but God is not. He is omnipotent and his son is equally so. He is above all human conception. There can be no attribute or likeness which can convey His greatness to any human creation. He, who says 'I know Him,' is as ignorant as one who says 'I know Him not.' This is the finding of the

authors of Upanishads of Ancient India As regards theology, there can be theory, but Hindus believe in the practice of such a theory Samkhya and other philosophies exult in high thinking and plain living, but do not demonstrate the truth behind them. It remained a masonic secret till it was discovered through human love how to realise divine love It is not the poet's imagination or the philosopher's stone or wise man's saying, but it is the response of the heart within and the heart without in the midst of the unknown which rules the universe It is not concentration of mind by Yoga, it is something much higher than that It is not the blind faith of a believer in the prophets of God or His son, it is the reciprocation of feelings between humanity and divinity It is not the sacrifice to gain some end or service or propitiation, but the ultimate happiness in realising the greatness of God in His universal love displayed in creation

The services of parents to their children are as unselfish as those of God above Is it Nature or God who provides milk in the breast of a mother before she gives birth to her child? What makes a man run to help a man in difficulty or in the grief of death without even his calling for help? In flood and fire even the sick forget their maladies and get strength to be of service to suffering humanity The presence of God and His goodwill one can find—this is called unselfish love, as when one swims and risks one's own life to save a drowning man The creation needs such help every moment and the Almighty Father renders it Universal love is the attribute of God Love makes one undertake things beyond one's power, which reveals the omnipotence of God above. Love feels the presence of a lover even when absent; difficulty and death are felt through the ministration of mutual attachment, and sometimes one hears Him speak when such is the feeling towards God God is demonstrated to man People call it halucination It is through love that God reveals Himself to man

Sri Krishna was such a man, in whom God was not only revealed but came to be united He was not an incarnation to perform some act but represented universal love for all Those who loved God saw Him, but those who feared God and blasphemed Him, lost their lives not at His hands but through the circle of time represented in his Disc (Chakra), the great weapon of God God is full of love and destruction is also the work of love Men and beasts eat what they love, but what they hate they throw away Death is not an enemy of love. Love gives peace and so does death. God is thus creator of the universe and its destroyer Love preserves its creation too

Sri Krishna worship has been the aim of the current great Epic. The mysterious faculty called love is the eye of the soul, and culture

and wisdom are the light which leads men to seek the steps of Heaven. The all absorbing love and the childlike simplicity of Sri Krishna while in the place of Jishodi and Nanda are nothing but sparks of true love for God above, the Creator of the Universe. There has been no blind ignorance which makes one pray to one who is not divine for earthly success. The poet describes this in the killing of the enemies of the children Bika and Putna. Sri Krishna's life has been painted like that of a man conscious of his own power to lead and command, even, if necessary, to conquer all who stood against his loving service to God above and man below. The test of true genius is to conquer the temptation of worldly enjoyments and dominions. He left the place of his love-making, Brindaban, before the age of puberty, and killed Kamsa and released his own parents, but did not accept the kingdom of Kamsa which was given to Kamsa's father. He who can overcome these greatest temptations of the world, viz., kingdom and women's love, can see the unfailing love and grace of Heaven.

Sri Krishna stood the acid test in leaving Brindaban, the place of his early exploits for good, killing Kamsa at Mathura to liberate his parents as well as to instal Kamsa's own father Ugrasena on the throne which had been usurped by his cruel and unfaithful son. He refused to ascend the throne of Kamsa when the same was offered to him. This made Sri Krishna famous. The table of contents of the great Epic distinctly says that it describes the greatness and glory of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna appears first in the great Epic at the Svayambara of Draupadi to denounce and expose the dark plot of the Kauravas to destroy the Pandavas. The Svayambara ceremony of Draupadi's marriage heralded the discovery of the Pandavas, hitherto unknown to the world or believed to have been destroyed in the fire of the lac house at Baranabata. The visit of Vyasa and Sri Krishna to the secret hiding place of the Pandavas, the conversation between Balaram and Sri Krishna at the Svayambara Hall pointing out the Pandavas and the word of advice of Draupada at the farewell of the Pandavas after the marriage give a clue to disclose Sri Krishna's hand in the marriage ceremony of Draupadi and explains the success of the Pandavas in coming into the limelight of chivalry and glory before the Royal Assembly.

The personality of Sri Krishna from the very beginning of the great Epic appears as the embodiment of great power, ability and success, combined with great forbearance and love for what is good and just. Through the whole Epic he figures as a godly character, ever striving to uphold the just and the right and denouncing and

dethroning the wicked and cruel. The great Epic depicts him as an eminently just and impartial arbiter, not taking any active part on either side, but equally helping both sides, one with his invincible legions and the other with his sage counsels according to the choice of each party. He possessed sufficient power and military strength to coerce the Kauravas to yield their just share to the Pandavas, but he forebore from using force and explored all avenues for attaining peace by gentle persuasion only. Though mighty in arms he himself condescended to undertake the humble mission of a peace messenger. Though he met with an outrageously haughty repulse from Duryodhana, who actually thought of making him a prisoner, Sri Krishna did not harbour any feelings of revenge but with superhuman generosity left him the assistance for peace and amity between the Kurus and the Pandavas, amid the din and uproar of the great war and its horrible carnage, in the falls of heroes and successes and reverses on either side, Sri Krishna stood quite unaffected. He first became famous as a powerful hero and next an upholder of a just cause, and then came to be regarded as a dispenser of universal love to friends and foes alike, and finally appeared enthroned as the divine God of universal love in the lamentations of the fallen heroes in the field of the great war and in their last rites.

His love is disinterested love, untrammelled by considerations of personal interest or affinity of relation. And he evoked the same selfless love in everybody he came in contact with. The Epic presents him as the fullgrown hero and king blessed with the conjugal love of his sixteen thousand married wives. His pre-Epic childhood life, when he dispensed universal love to all boys and girls, with whom he had no personal relation or community of interest, and kindled similar universal love in them, best depicts his godly, universal love and therefore in his worship his childhood (Brindaban life with Sri Radha by him) has been chosen by his countless worshippers as the best image of worship and that is why neither his kingly manhood image of power and grandeur of the active Epic period nor his old age sage and savant image of the closing Epic period have been idolized by the Krishna worshippers, *i.e.*, the Vaishnavas. That is why Sri Krishna and Radha are popular forms of the images of Sri Krishna worship.

During the Epic period Narayana worship had obtained ascendancy and was the predominant cult. In the course of the Epic we find Sri Krishna's divinity gradually unfolding and manifesting itself and in the end Sri Krishna is found as the incarnation of God Narayana Himself—rather than any partial or full avatar of Him—and Sri Krishna worship

gradually supplanted Narayana worship, or rather, coalesced with and became identified with Narayana worship. Sri Krishna was found to be Narayana Himself and in worshipping Him, Narayana was believed to be worshipped.

The whole object and purpose of the Epic was to bring out this idea—the triumph of universal love and sage counsel over immoral brute force. Sri Krishna, the incarnation of universal love, and his sage counsel was on the side of the Pandavas and the whole of Sri Krishna's invincible army was on the side of the wicked Kurus, and the great Epic works out the triumph of the former over the latter though Sri Krishna never took up his invincible weapons or fought on the side of the Pandavas but simply charioteered them, which is emblematic of guiding them with sage counsel.

Arjuna's address to Sri Krishna at their parting is very interesting —

"Vaisampayana said — O Janardana ! Highly wonderful is this which you have done from desire of doing what is agreeable to us, viz., the destruction in battle of the Kaurava (primarily the son of Dhritrashtra). That army had been burnt by you which I (subsequently) defeated in battle. That feat was achieved by you on account of which victory to me mine ! By the power of your intelligence was shown the means by which was duly effected the destruction of Duryodhana in battle, as also of Karna, as of the sinful king of the Sindhus and Bhurishravas \*.

Yudhishthira eulogised Krishna's services and bade him adieu with rich presents as his elder brother.

"Yudhishthira said — Do you then go, taking with you various kinds of gems and various sorts of wealth. Do you, O hero of the Satwata race, also take with you whatever else you like. It is through your grace, O Keshava, that the whole Earth, O hero, has come under our sway and all our enemies have been killed †.

It is significant that after the war Sri Krishna gladly accepted Gandhari's curse.

"Gandhari said — On the thirty sixth year from this, O destroyer of Madhu, you will, after bringing about the death of your kinsmen and friends and sons, perish by disgusting means within the forest. The ladies of your family, deprived of sons, kinsmen, and friends, shall weep and cry over us these ladies of the Bharata family' Vaisampayana continued — Hearing these words, the great Sri Krishna, addressing the worshipful Gandhari, said to her these words, smilingly, 'There is none in the world, save myself, who can exterminate the Vrishnis. I know this well. I am trying to bring it about. In impetrating this curse, O you of excellent vows, you have helped me in the accomplishment of that work. The Vrishnis are incapable of being killed by others, whether human beings or gods or Danavas. The Yadavas, therefore, shall be killed by one another.' After the Dasharha hero had said so, the Pandavas became stupefied. Stricken with anxiety, all of them became hopeless of life ‡. Krishna said — 'Arise, arise, O Gandhari, do not grieve. Through your

\* The Mahabharata, Asramedha Parva, Chapter LII, verses 15—21.

† The Mahabharata, Asramedha Parva, Chapter LII, verses 49—50.

‡ The Mahabharata, Strer Parva, Chapter LXV, page 27, verses 44—49.

fault, this huge destruction has taken place. Your son Durjodhana was wicked, envious, and exceedingly arrogant. Praising his wicked acts, you thought them to be good. Highly ruthless, he was the embodiment of hostilities, and disobedient to the commands of the old. Why do you then attribute your own faults to me? Dead or lost, the person who grieves for what has already taken place, suffers greater grief. By grieving one increases it two fold. A saintly woman bears children for the practice of austerities, the cow brings forth offspring for bearing burden, the mare brings forth her young for acquiring speed of motion, the Sudra woman bears a child for increasing the number of servants, the Vaishya woman for increasing the number of keepers of cattle. A princess, however, like you, brings forth sons for being killed."

Durjodhana did not openly listen to the wise counsels of his beloved parents and his well-wishers. His own feelings were his only guide. He did not dread death and disgrace as long as he was in possession of the kingdom and in the enjoyment of pleasure. This was patent from the reply he gave to Sri Krishna on his mission of peace. He overstepped all decency of conduct and rules of court to which the elders took strong exception. He had no command over himself and did not subject himself to any rule of discipline. If such a man and his followers are worthy of notice in an Epic called great, then the man who holds such a view must hang his head in shame. It has never been consistent with the ancient Hindu ideals with which the book was originally composed by Vyasa, one of the law givers of Ancient India. The past and its remembrance have important lessons which the Epics record to afford pleasure in the thought of those who suffered and established the kingdom of peace and loved instead of raising inordinate cravings of flesh and blood.

There must be the lesson of wisdom and humility in the presence of the spirit of God, the ethic of morality and love which leads man to eternity. Peace is the result of a disciplined and cultured mind where the spirit exults; when that spirit is united with the Universal spirit the question of eternity arises. This is the order of progress from the moral sphere to the spiritual ascendancy of eternity. Man alone can do much for himself as he is placed in the midst of ever changing incidents and events of life. It is the knowledge and power of the heart within a man which gives him peace in faith, trust and love of Him whom the heart yearns to meet, and the meeting place is that universal love which does not fight in the field of battle but only watches and helps the good.

Sri Krishna represented universal love and Yudhishthira the disciplined and cultured mind in whom the unity of the universal spirit of love met and led him to eternity. This is the solution of the plot which Vyasa conceived and displayed in his great work.

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\* The Mahabharata, Stree Parva, Chapter XLVI, page 23, verses 1-5

Sri Krishna, the king-maker of Ancient India, whom the Mahabharata describes as the ideal hero of love, learning, intelligence and justice, first appeared subservient to God Narayana and then became an emblem of universal love. The empire of love, which he conceived in Brindaban in his younger days, he established at Dwarka under a firm root in the kingdom of Yudhishthira, whom he established by his good counsel and superior wisdom.

The country was fully alive to the importance of virtuous principles and introduced strictness into its morals by the punishment inflicted in the great war of reform. Sri Krishna with the Pandavas established the power of guardians and parents over tyrannical sons like Karna and Duryodhana and placed the kingdom in the hands of their fathers. Dhritrashtra expressed his satisfaction after his great bereavement at the fearful war by saying that he had not enjoyed such happiness during the reign of his son as he experienced during that of Yudhishthira. The benumbed senses were enlivened with a variety of energetic and subtle powers for which Sri Krishna was translated to the idea of perfect godhead and the Pandavas demi-gods. Sri Krishna was the ideal God of love, his heroic sister Subhadra was given to Arjuna, the glorious Draupadi went to Yudhishthira, and Sri Krishna himself ruled the heart of all the maidens of Brindaban so that even when they were married they could not derive that pure delight which they experienced in their maidenhood in the exploits with Sri Krishna.

The field of the great battle of Kurukshetra is described as the place where the fight for religion took place, and the great incarnation of God was Sri Krishna, who was not a wielder of arms or a fighting hero but the charioteer of a hero, Arjuna, his brother-in-law. The moral of the great Epic seems to have been that success follows virtue and Sri Krishna. He was the great receptacle of love which in youth ignited the hearts of the fair maidens of Brindaban, united in ties of marriage with thousands of royal princesses and kept them in peace in Dwarka, and gave birth to innumerable heroes, amongst whom was Cupid, the God of love. Gandhari, queen mother of the Kurus, on behalf of the widows of the fallen heroes on the battlefield, cursed Sri Krishna for not preventing the cruel carnage and the miseries of thousands of unfortunate girls who lost their husbands and children. Sri Krishna in order to appease their grief by practical demonstration, accepted the curse gladly that all earthly creation is liable to destruction except the true spirit of love. This is the true philosophy of love and divinity enunciated in the great field of battle of Kurukshetra. In world politics and religion the ideal Narayana and Nara were at first represented by Sri Krishna and Yudhishthira, who died without a successor.



The river Jamun is the stream of love where Sri Krishna and Radha had their first love lesson with the flute of the heart which resounded through Brindaban. The thousand-headed hydra of envy and malice Kain was controlled by Sri Krishna—a feat sufficient to make him ascend to the throne of heavenly love. He dethroned Indra by topping the worship of Indra and introduced and enjoined the feeding of the cows and worshipping the hill Govardhana. From the speech of Sri Krishna it is evident that Brindaban was a Gopi settlement. He first demonstrated to the people there how men and women and children could be taught the first lesson for elevating their hearts from the darkness of avarice to the active beneficence of distributing food and drink to the needy, and to enjoy the bliss of unselfish observance of duty.

The ground for giving Sri Krishna the place of honour and worshipping him with Padya and Arghya in the Raj Suya sacrifice, is given as follows:—

'We have offered him the first worship in consideration of his fame, his heroism and his greatness. There is none here even if he is a child, whom we have not taken into our consideration (in offering the Arghya to Krishna). Passing over many persons who are accomplished and learned, we have thought Hari as deserving of the first worship. Amongst Brahmanas he who is old in knowledge, amongst Kshatriyas, he, who is great in strength. Amongst Vaisyas he, who is rich in possessions and wealth; and amongst the Sudras he who is old in age, deserves to be worshipped. There are two reasons for offering the worship to Girinda (Krishna). He is widely learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, and he is also very great in power. Who else is there in the world of men except Keshava (Krishna) who is so distinguished? Liberality, cleverness, knowledge of the truth (Veda), bravery, molten, achievements, excellent intelligence, humility, beauty, firmness, contentment and prosperity, all live for ever in Achyuta (Krishna). Therefore, you should approve the worship offered to one who is endued with such accomplishments, who is (our) preceptor, father, and guru, and who is worthy of the Arghya and of the worship. Hrishikesha (Krishna) is the Ritwija, preceptor,—worthy of being selected to marry one's daughter,—the suataka, the king and the friend. Therefore, Achyuta (Krishna) has been worshipped" \*.

The sources of divine love are evident from the attributes of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna was never single, he is always with his consort, Sri or Radha or Laksimi, hence he is called Sri Krishna. God cannot have any form as He is above maya or illusion, but when He comes to earth it is as an incarnation like Rama, who is merely a superman, a part of the great god but not God himself. God himself is the conscience in cultured man and woman and love makes an acquaintance with him.

"Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source  
Of human offspring, sole propriety  
In paradise of all things common also.  
By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men

\* The Mahabharata, Sabha Parva, Chapter XXXVIII, verses 10—22

Among the bestial herds to range, by thee  
 Founded in reason loyal, just and pure,  
 Relations dear, and all the charities  
 Of father, son, and brother, first were known  
 Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,  
 Or think thee unfitting holiest place,  
 Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,  
 Whose bed is unfeild and chaste pronounce'd,  
 Present, or past as saints and patriarchs us'd  
 Here Love his golden shafts employ, here lights  
 His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,  
 Reigns here and revels not in the bought smile  
 Of harlots loveless joyless unendear'd,  
 Casual fruition, nor in court amours,  
 Mix'd dance or wanton mask, or midnight ball,  
 Or serenade, which the starv'd lover sings  
 To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain ""  
 "God hath assign'd us nor of me shall pass  
 Unprais'd, for nothing lovelier can be found  
 In woman, than to study household good,  
 And good works in her husband to promote  
 Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd  
 Labour, as to debar us when we need  
 Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,  
 Food of the mind or this sweet intercourse  
 Of looks and smiles, for smiles from reason flow,  
 To brute deny'd and are of love the food,  
 Love not the lowest and of human life "" †  
 "In loving thou dost well, in passion not,  
 Wherein true love consists not, love refines  
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat  
 In reason, and is judicious, is the scale  
 By which to heav'nly love thou mayst ascend,  
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause  
 Among the beasts no mate for thee was found ‡

Love is both the way and guide to heavenly love, thus the angel Raphael admonished Adam. But the Hindus go further. Sri Krishna is described as divine love personified, who came down to earth to wage war against vanity, calumny, envy, malice, the symptoms of human weakness in Jarasandha, Duryodhana, Kamsa, Sisupala, Karna, Dussasana, putting against them ideals of the Pandavas to make the world realise divine love through human love. Love is nothing but an illusion when man and woman transgress, are merged in passion and are lost.

"That with exhilarating vapour bland  
 About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers  
 Made err, was now exhal'd, and grosser sleep  
 Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams

\* Milton's "Paradise Lost," page 111

† Ibid, page 231

‡ Ibid, pages 220-221

Encumber'd, now had left them, up they rose  
 As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,  
 Soon found their eyes how open'd and their minds  
 How darken', innocence, that as a veil  
 Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,  
 Just confidence, and native righteousness,  
 And honour from about them, naked left  
 To guilty shame, he cover'd, but his robe  
 Uncover'd more So rose the Danite strong  
 Herculean Samson from the harlot-lap  
 Of Philistean Delilah, and wak'd  
 Shorn of his strength, they destitute and bare  
 Of all their virtue silent, and in face  
 Confounded, long they sate, as stricken mute,  
 Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd,  
 At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd  
 "O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear  
 To that false worm, of whomsoever taught  
 To counterfeit man's voice, true in our fall,  
 False in our promis'd rising, since our eyes  
 Open'd we find indeed, and find we know  
 Both good and evil, good lost, and evil got,  
 Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,  
 Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,  
 Of innocence, of faith, of purity,  
 Our wonted ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,  
 And in our faces evident the signs  
 Of foul concupiscence, whence evil store  
 Even shame, the last of evils, of the first  
 Be sure then How shall I behold the face  
 Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy  
 And rapture so oft beheld' those heav'nly shapes  
 Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze  
 Insufferably bright' "

The gate of divine love is closed to those whose mind is fouled with the darkness of passion and vanity. God is a law to the man of sense but pleasure is a law to a fool. Riches bring no honour to him who possesses them if his wants are not removed, for he seeks the help of others. Cultured man is the slave to God, but the ignorant, vain or wicked has to be a slave to a man below. It is impossible for those who have low or mean ideas about life and spend their lives in mercenary unemployments of forefathers to produce anything worthy of admiration which can form the subject matter of an Epic or history. Nature never meant man to be a low beast only, mad after his own pleasure and busy after his own existence. From the moment of man's birth he is nursed by the unselfish love of his parents, the work of the divine soul within them. Their love makes them sacrifice everything for the infant with no idea of any return from him. Others also tend

him and place him on the stage of the world. The infant's happiness and misery depend more or less on education and environment.

The sublime and lofty spirits of the ancients, reflected in the Indian Epics, are giving vent in the ideals of human love ascending to divine love of which nature actually designed man to be. The description of the tactics of the war or the bravery or deceptions of the conquering heroes could never be the theme of the great Epic, it was a question of the victory of the side which had been imbued with universal love and not passion of winning kingdom, power and wealth by force of arms and tactics. It was for this Yudhishthira wanted to retire to expiate his sins in the war and such a thing could not take place in the beginning of the battle which gave birth to the Gita versions. It may be poetic but it was quite unnatural. Gita is a lesson of wisdom, religion and duty and not that of universal love with which Sri Krishna was from the very beginning identified. Sri Krishna gave his best soldiers to Duryodhana to fight against the Pandavas and he agreed to give counsels of love to the Pandavas. This cost the life of the nephew of Sri Krishna but he did not mind. He was not at all excited after the unlawful killing of Abhimanyu. How could he be aroused to do so in the case of Arjuna as the dramatic Mahabharata describes? Sri Krishna is not a partisan as the Gita depicts him.

"The blessed Lord said 'Again, O mighty armed, hear thou my supreme word, that, desiring thy welfare, I will declare to thee who are beloved.' The blessed Lord said 'Blessed be thou! I will declare to thee my divine glory by its chief characteristics, O best of the Kurus, there is no end to details of Me .. Asvattha of all trees, and of divine Itishis Narada, of Gandharvas (Celestial singers) Chitraratha, of the perfected the Vuni hapila. Uchchaishravas of horses know me, nectar (Amrita, the nectar of immortality) born, Airavata of lordly elephants, and of men the Monarch. Of weapons I am the thunderbolt, of cows I am Kamadhuk, I am handarpa of the progenitors, of serpents Vasuki am I' +

Love is virtue, sympathy and the dynamo lever which rules the world, and is represented in Sri Krishna. It is well-known that Sri Krishna's father and mother were both persecuted in the most cruel manner before he was born. It was depicted in bright colours how Basudeva carried the infant to Brindaban at dead of night, overcoming all difficulties and exchanged him with a girl to preserve his life. There is no affection so pure and heavenly as that demonstrated there. Love is the purification of the heart from selfish ends. It gives strength and courage, nay, it is sacred fire which leads man to nobler aims of life at the sacrifice of his own. The power to love truly and devotedly is the noblest gift of God above. The child Gopal, as Sri Krishna was known in his infancy, and the figure which is worshipped even now in

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\* Mrs. Annie Besant's "Bhagavad Gita" 10th discourse, verse 1, page 133.

+ Ibid page 139 verse 19 and page 141, verses 23-23

India, gives vent to love's language in a child. "Love is a child that talks in broken language, yet then he speaks most plain." (Dryden) A child excites love in the heart of all without any jealousy, but Kamsa wanted to destroy the child who, it was said, would kill him. It proves that love has no power when curbed by selfish ends. The stages of life are important in the growth to manhood. Youth is the most important of all the stages which connect childhood with manhood for it is then an individual is capable of thinking upon the theme of life. The beauty and poetry of life lies in its beginning, for then one must pass all the flowery places of love to develop the mind and realise the connection of soul with it. Anticipation is pleasant, but with Sri Krishna it was a question of realisation from the start.

The dream of the poet had been realised in the birth of Sri Krishna.

*Give me now life, warm, palpitating sweet  
What all the grace and beauty leaves the old,  
When like a rose it withers at my feet,  
Or like a hearth grows cold*

Sri Krishna ignited the light of love in his adopted parents, Nanda and Yashoda, and their relations by the smile which graced his face and the cry of want in the hand he extended with the ball of food in it. He does not know how to eat, one must make him do so, he, who provides food for the world—this is the child God of the Hindus. The creation is impossible without the help of Maya, the love of parents in this world. The love of parents is the shade of the Almighty Father above within one-self. The father and mother, Bisu-leva and Devaki, stole another's daughter to save the life of their own son. It was for this selfishness that Krishna remained with Nanda and Yashoda as their son and punished his own parents. Krishna, brought up from infancy with the love of those who had no blood connection with him, aroused the love which God as a child could excite in the heart of all around him. In youth he excited the passion of love which in time enlarges the scene of one's future happiness. Love is the perpetual source of fears and anxieties, with which the well-wishers of Sri Krishna were distressed but he himself was not. What a child loves nobody knows, yet the root of love is in the child, the essence of unselfish love is there. The child rules the heart, and love is a debt which inclination always pays; it is a mystery of mysteries. Love is the peace that restores harmony and confidence.

Sri Krishna mixed freely with girls of his own age in Brindaban and they could not but fall in love with him. He played on the flute with a heart to respond to their heart of love, but avoided their personal company. He teased and perplexed them in every way.

decency and good manners. The girls used to bathe in the river naked, so he stole their clothes to prevent them doing so again. He stood against the practice of women carrying water from a long distance for domestic needs. He was born with all the warm affections and ardent longings after what is good. There is a woman at the beginning of great things, and so it is with the question of human love, but with that of divine love it is Sri Krishna and nobody else. Divine love permeates through the universe and cannot centre anywhere in individual man or woman.

Sri Krishna is the god who did everything and the others played minor parts and were more or less co-wards. The whirling discus was the weapon of Sri Krishna and the plough that of Balarama. These are the two true instruments of love, on which the prosperity of the world depended from the very beginning of creation.

The story of Sri Krishna's infant life the great Epic does not give; he first appeared at the Svayambhara of Draupadi. The conception of his infant life may be expressed in the lines of Wordsworth

"Meek Infant ' among all forlornest things  
The most forlorn—one life of that bright star  
The second glory of the Heavens'—Thou hast,  
Already hast survived that great decay,  
That transformation through the wide earth felt,  
And by all nations "

.. .. ..  
"Thine infant history, on the minds of those  
Who might have wandered with thee "

.. .. ..  
' Thy loneliness or shall those smiles be called  
Feelers of love put forth as if to explore  
This untried world, and to prepare thy way  
Through a strait passage intricate and dim? "

(WORDSWORTH)

The aim of his early life in Brindaban seemed to have been to love and be loved by others, and at last he became a happy warrior. Whosoever exerts himself to become just and virtuous receives the prize. Every one who runs a race does not get the prize. He who rules the world with the sceptre of wealth and a following of soldiers, subjects himself to many things and thus loves his liberty, but the man who reveals the love of God in his actions, fights the just cause by his wisdom and the prowess of his arms, he is worshipped with heart and soul by all who come in contact with him. He is not the child of nature but God himself, for nature cannot vanquish him with her love and devotion. Woman draws man, but Sri Krishna was just the opposite—he drew woman and was not overcome by her love. Women as a body could not do so. He excited their love by the play-

ing of his flute but never betrayed his passion for them. So Wordsworth sang the character of the Happy Warrior

“Tis he whose law is reason, who depends  
Upon that law as on the best of friends,  
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still  
To evil for guard against worse ill  
And what in quality or act is best  
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,  
He fixes good on good alone, and owes  
To virtue every triumph that he knows  
Who, if he rise to station of command,  
Rises by open means, and there will stand  
On honourable terms, or else retire,  
And in himself possesses his own desire,  
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same  
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim,  
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait  
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state,  
Whom they must follow, on whose head must fall,  
Like showers of manna, if they come at all  
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife”

(WORDSWORTH)

Sri Krishna was depicted as a lover, an inspired generous spirit in the tasks of real life, and played in the many games of life, of love and justice. Neither could danger discourage him nor could the thought of tender love betray him. What he valued he won, what he undertook he fulfilled. He did not bow his head to any king, however powerful, he received homage from the greatest king to whom all the kings of India paid homage. He drew his breath not in human applause but in the confidence of heaven's joy. He built his castles in mid-ocean with the love of sixteen thousand beautiful princesses of India, yet none of them could enslave him. He was never found weeping over their separation or making any arrangements for them save and except calling upon Arjuna to look after them as in duty bound by his relationship.

Sri Krishna had no consciousness of Ego, *i.e.*, the sense of I do this, I do that, which is called Ahankar or knowledge of the vanity of self. Yudhishthira was found fault with by Sri Krishna in the Asvamedha Parva and Kama Gita he read out to Yudhishthira. The Gita is on that line, but very elaborate. Dharma means not only religion but morality, duty and politics. Sri Krishna diagnosed the disease in Yudhishthira's heart that the great destruction at the fierce battle of Kurukshetra was, after all, the work of Yudhishthira. This thought oppressed Yudhishthira, and he was grieved. This was far from the fact as the great Sri Krishna proved to him by an allegory in the Kama Gita—to which the Srimad Bhagabata owed its origin—in the court of the Kurus by Sanjaya. What is divine love [and Sri

Krishna ? There it is fully described, and what is amply described in the *Srimad Bhagabata* needs no repetition here. Sri Krishna's attributes of virtue are found expressed in his own mouth when he revived the great Parikshit on his own lap from the curse of the wicked Asvathama.

"Let this child be revived, if I have not told a lie or retired from the field of battle in my life by the virtue of it. Let this child be revived, if I have not made any difference between the beloved Abhimanyu and virtue and piety so dear to me. Let this child be revived if I have never quarrelled with Arjuna and I never departed from the virtue or truth."

This is the Parikshit who was revived by merit of the piety of Sri Krishna, who was himself the incarnation of divine love and peace on the earth below. He built his empire in the heart of sixteen thousand beauties of India by what he learned from the girls of Brindaban, who performed the celebrated *Rashlila* free from carnality and lust. The abstraction of love reflected in the pure heart of those blessed girls brought deliverance of the soul in some, but in Radha it was the union of souls within and without. This is the ideal Hindu conception of the enjoyment of love and the salvation of the soul. This is greater than the theory of Kapila or that Nirvana of Buddha. Thirst is quenched by the taste of water and not by the mirage in the desert. The ant knows the sweetness of sugar, but the sugar itself knows it not. A devotee alone knows the sweetness and gravity of divine love, but not the god himself. One cannot realise what love is if one has not loved anyone or been loved by another. The sweetness of love does not lie so much in the reciprocity with which earthly love exults, but its divinity lies in the stability of the union of the soul within oneself and that of the God above who excites love in His creation.

The great Epic and Puranas demonstrate it not by theories but by the examples of the sixteen thousand beauties, bred and brought up in luxury and wealth, who enslaved themselves at the feet of Sri Krishna. Such a thing was impossible had it been a case of earthly love springing from selfish motives and connected with the senses. The gospel of universal love which Sri Krishna preached was in the sound of his flute through sky and air which touched the heart of his lovers. He raised his voice in the mad brawl in the *Svayambara* of Draupadi and the marriage took place. He killed the great tyrants of the age Kamsa, Jarasandha, Sisupala, etc., without the loss of life of anyone else. It is this which made him come to be regarded as great as God. His policy made his followers, the Pandavas, the conquerors of the world, and he who stood against his worship was removed by the discus of love which saved the life of the braggart so many times before for the promise of love. He stood against the Yudus in the marriage of love.



between Arjuna and Subhadra, perhaps the first of its kind. His connection with the Pandavas did not stand in the way of his giving his best trained soldiers to Duryodhana when the latter begged for them. He stood against the vicious conduct of Duryodhana and the blackmail practised by the vicious dice play at the Kuru Court, where the same Duryodhana was conspiring to catch and imprison him and abused him grossly through his messenger of war.

"For no reason, O Krishna, are you considered to be of great renown in this world and now they will know that many are the oxen who are impotent though they are blessed with horns. A king like me will not condescend to fight with a slave of Kamsa clad in mail." "Assume the form what you showed once in the Kuru Court by the help of illusion and come and fight with me all your power along with Arjuna. One cannot be god by illusion, it is only sometimes frightful but to a fighter it excites his anger. I can assume many forms in my body, it is by the force of mind the great creator brought forth his creation. It is not by creating fright one can be successful." "Never dream that you shall get back your kingdom from the fear of Sri Krishna—neither deception, nor illusion nor trick of a conjurer is frightful to one who has taken up arms to fight. Thousand Krishnas and Arjunas will fly from the field when confronted by me, whose arms did not strike in vain."

Yet Sri Krishna did not fight in the great battle but was only the charioteer of Arjuna. Not for nothing people ascribed divinity to him. His well-known conch of universal love sounded in the battlefield to warn the warriors of impending danger and he saved the lives of many either by warning, counsel or by intervening with his own person. He did not weep for his beloved nephew Abhimanyu nor was he roused to take active measures to revenge the gross wrong himself, but moved unconcerned in the field of battle and solaced his sister in the camp. It is this which made him be looked upon as supernatural or heavenly. The king Sisupala openly said in the Rajasuya of Yudhishtira that the kings assembled there paid him tribute out of virtuous motives alone, which amounted to a tribute of love and religion. In that sacrifice Sri Krishna received the first worship, and it was not a tribute of chivalry for the names of kings were recited who were more entitled to it if that was the object of the sacrifice. The great charge against his worship, levelled by Sisupala was—"Who will offer him worship when he has fallen from religion?"

It is evident that Sri Krishna was the reformer of the age in which he lived. In reply to the alleged charge it was held not only present in the assembly beat Sri Krishna in knowledge, virtue, intelligence and action. If he was a reformer he proved to the world that there is a divinity in man which is above ideas of selfishness. The greatest of all

\* The Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX verses 111-112.

† Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX verses 111-112.

‡ Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 111-112.

heroes, Sri Krishna proved to the world that love is the greatest of all weapons in the world with which divine beings are invested, and God is the source of such love from which Maya (illusion) draws her inspiration and makes the creation which cannot last. What is love rests in the soul of man and is not to be found in the outer world in the body of external creation. Sri Krishna, if one truly realises him as a god, must be regarded as of the inner world and in that spirit he moves in the great Rāshīlī of the great book of divine love Srimad Bhāgavata, which brought salvation to the king Parīkshit, who died bitten by the poisonous snake and was revived by the love of Sri Krishna to which he was initiated by the son of Vyāsa, Suka, in the great book just mentioned.

Sri Krishna, the emblem of divine love, showed the rare and noble virtue of God by his disinterestedness in all concerns of the great Epic. He said to Arjuna before the war:

"No stone would be left unturned by me to do what would contribute to the general well being of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas."

He was not biased nor could he be bribed, as would appear from the quotations below —

"It is impossible for me to do anything against the divine dispensation which rules the human destiny, or to control the wicked inclination of a man who disregards virtue." (Vidura said to the old king Dhritarashtra) "Vidura said — What you desire to present your guest Krishna with is much, but the action of the Dasharha race deserves all this and much more, or indeed the whole earth. For the sake of virtue or for desire of pleasing him however you do not give all this to Krishna, and I speak truly that you do this for the gain of yourself." "You desire to win over the son of Krishna to your own side by wealth, and by this means you want to create a gulf between himself and the Pāṇḍavas." "On anything else besides a pot full of water and water for washing his feet and interrogations on his health he will not even cast his eyes. Show him, however, that hospitality which is acceptable to that large-soul one deserving of honour, O king, that Janardana is the proper party for showing honour to. Keshava comes here expecting to do good to the Kurus. Do that, O king, by which that object may be gained. The scion of the Dasharha race desires peace for yourself and for Durdhāna and for the Pāṇḍavas as well, O chief among kings, do you, therefore, what he says."†

The acts of Sri Krishna are commemorated and celebrated in the birthday anniversary (Janmastami) even now all over India. The shrines of India are full of his images, which are worshipped by thousands of pilgrims with sincere love, admiration and devotion. No better proof of divine love than these could be given, as he commanded the universal love of all men during his life-time. Sri Krishna is the emblem of divine love which the great Epic Mahābhārata preaches.

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\* The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter LXXIX, verse 1

† Udyoga Parva, Chapter LXXIX, verse 6

‡ The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter LXXXVII, verses 6-7, 10, & 13-16



unquestioned God. But Krishna has 'it, calling, man, god, or God, he reveals himself at first only in human form."

There is universal hankering after enjoyment. In the spiritual realm of the Hindus, God is the sole enjoyer like a materialist. Soul can give him enjoyment and not the senses. God has nobody. Where the milk-maids of Brindaban enjoyed Sri Krishna, the person of Sri Krishna was absent but his spirit enlightened by the full moon and stars gave them the enjoyment in the separation form in the material sense. The poets develop love in separation. The great Indian poet Kalidas did in his famous *Sakuntala*, *Kumarsambhava*, *Meghaduta* and *Raghubansa*. All these are the love of separation. Separation makes one realise true goodness by analysis. All human beings are subjected to Maya and naturally fall an easy prey to temptations, and Sri Krishna by his own example showed and proved to the world how to avoid illusion. Sri Krishna was there as long as was necessary to develop his senses and power to control them. When he learnt this fully by practice he left the place to remove the bad example of the evil practices of Kamsa. The milk maids wanted him but he did not return, he was then in the midst of married wives, he saw their frailties and left them to practice Yoga to leave this mortal evil. This is the long and short of Sri Krishna's life in the past which was depicted in the sacred books of the Hindus.

The great Epic is concerned not with his early exploits but with his political and philosophical if not spiritual mission in the world. In world politics no man can beat him. It was his policy at Draupadi's marriage at the dramatic disclosure of the Pandavas before their flight from the lac house that exposed the Kuru chiefs before the kings of the world present at the *Svayambara* and made them hang their heads and agree to give up the share of the Pandavas without trouble. It was his policy which killed Jarasandha, another tyrant of India, and liberated the kings imprisoned for a sacrifice to declare himself the Emperor of India. It was he who removed another like him, Sisupala, at the *Rajasuya*, and made Yudhisthira and Draupadi the Emperor and Empress of India without any bloodshed. It was he who took upon himself the task of vindicating the actions of the Pandavas and censuring the Kurus in their court on his peace mission. It was bearding the lions in their den, and Durdjodhana and his friends felt the insult very keenly and tried to imprison him. If they attempted to do so, he told them plainly, they would be killed and he was ready for it. This non-plussed them. He knew that his mission would be abortive, but he undertook the same with a view to convince the world as a warning that virtue will triumph,

though it may suffer in the beginning. He was a messenger of virtue and was rewarded in the end.

The human soul has the power of dominating the soul of God, as the great Sri Radha by her own example proved. Sri Radha's love is divine love to which Sri Krishna is addicted. No religion of the world could think of demonstrating it. This is the great riddle of love solved by Sri Radha and Sri Krishna in their exploits of love, which the base material world interpret in their own unbrid fashion. If they were guilty of any heinous crime the sentimental Hindus who exult in the Ramayana could not accept Sri Krishna as a God greater than Rama, is the former as the development of the latter whose love, life and work, the prophet Sri Chaitanya explored. Sri Krishna was the hero of love and not of the famous battlefield at Kurukshetra. He was there to counsel the human hero Arjuna and his brothers.

Incarnation of God came to earth to perform distinct works. They were not the conception of the Vedic or Upanishad ages but of the Puranic. Incarnations cannot remain one moment after their work is done. Sri Krishna was not an incarnation, though his brother Bhishma was. Sri Krishna is God himself, he is divine love, his work is to demonstrate what is divine love distinct from human love. The Epic demonstrates human love and for that reason Sri Krishna is not the hero of the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata does not describe one hero like Rama and therefore the greatness of the Mahabharata over the Ramayana. The five Pandavas were the different attributes of humanity and love, Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadrā and Satyawatī were the distinguishing features, womanly virtues. Bhishma, Bhishma and Sri Krishna were ideals of wisdom, chivalry and divine love, respectively. It is not the duty of these men to pass through the different stages of human life like the Pandavas or any other heroes. Bhishma and Bhishma were the great counsellors of the Kuru Court, their births were mysterious, their marriages were not known, they left no heirs. One was minister of counsel and the other minister of war to the Kurus, but Sri Krishna was the minister of divine love, which ruled supreme in the heart of the great Pandavas and their family. Gandhari cursed the great Sri Krishna because Sri Krishna was so difficult to realise that his children, lulled in the lap of luxury, did not realise him.

Divine love and luxury and passion are quite apart. The ancient sages developed divine love by the discipline of early life, into which the Pandavas were initiated in the woods during their exile. The demand for five villages by Sri Krishna on behalf of the Pandavas is full of meaning. The institute of the ancient Hindu Dakṣa Samhita says.—

"He, who enjoys others' kingdom by force or other-wise, cannot be called a hero but he, who conquers the five senses of knowledge along with the mind and to refer to the five villages of the body can truly be called a hero and a lord, a conqueror him be he God or Man!"\*

It may equally apply to the Pandavas and Draupadi, the mind over whom the divin love of Sri Krishna concentrated

The great Christ and Sri Krishna are not the same, though attempts have been made to prove this. Sri Krishna was born of a father and mother and nursed by another parent and was not an adventitious production like Christ, the great The learned Dr Hopkins' views will provide interesting reading on the point —

"The West owes much to India and though most of this was brought westward centuries after the Christ era, it is still within the bounds of possibility that one on the New Testament was not completed without a graft from such a foreign growth. But this is as far as the historical data permit us to go, and such a possibility, affecting at most only what is secondary in the account furnishes no base for the belief that the original narrative of Christ's birth and teaching derives from Hindu sources."† "In the fourth century, too, arose the practice of observing Christmas Day, which was celebrated not at first on December 25, but on various dates, for in the third century Christ's birthday was variously held to be on January 5 or 6, March 28, April 11 or 20, May 20 and November 19, just as the Puranas, that describe the Birthday Festival of Sri Krishna give the time variously on different dates (between June and September) though they all agree that the hour is midnight. We cannot think, as was taught when Sri Krishna's name was first explained as the *nomen ipsum corruptum Christi* that Krishna worship is all a corruption of the Christian religion. For with more light on the background we can see more clearly what lies behind the Child god Krishna. But in seeing this we are also brought to recognize how great is the change in the character of the Hindu divinity. So decided is the alteration and so direct is the connection between this later phase of Krishnaism and the Christianity of the early centuries of our era, that it is no expression of extravagant fancy but a sober historical statement to say that in all probability the Hindus in this cult of the Madonna and Child have in reality though unwittingly, been worshipping the Christ-Child for fully a thousand years"‡

"In the first place Upanishads may be of any age from 600 B. C. onward, and sectarian Upanishads are uniformly late. Then the metre and language of the Gita are such as to make it impossible to connect it closely in time with the ancient Upanishads even in its oldest parts, and it has besides two different parts, one of which is later than the other, so that it is pretty clear that it has been re-written. But above all, not only is the religion as inculcated, with its devotion not to a stern master, but to a sin-forgiving love-demanding saviour god in human form, something absolutely unique up to the time it appears, but it is acknowledged also both by friend and foe in the Epic narrative itself that Krishna is a new form of God (not a new god, for Krishna had long been a popular god), and that the new religion has as yet few adherents. When these facts are weighed together with the fact that the Epic, as we have it, is at most not more than two hundred years older than the Christian era, and that it is almost certain that parts of it are as late as two or perhaps more centuries

\* 7th Chapter, 17 and 18 verses

† Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," page 163

‡ Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 166 and 167

after our era it seems possible that the original Gita, which was without doubt composed at least 200 B. C. and appears to have been at first a Yogin tract simply, was affected by the introduction of a new religious spirit and that it absorbed some of the ideas presented in the form most Oriental and nearest to Hindu conceptions, namely, in the fourth Gospel \*

"In other respects also, the language and tales of the later Epic suggest the possibility of Christian influence quite as much as Christian tales suggest Indian influence. I lay no great weight on them, but they should be known, if only as a companion piece to what is found in the West and referred to the East. Krishna is a by-name of Vyasa, the author of the Epic (in so far as the arranger of the mass may be called author), who, though not identified with Krishna as Supremo God, is himself divine, and is described as "the unborn (that is, the eternal) and ancient one, the only son of God, born of a virgin, very part, and of God". He is a figure unknown till the end of the Epic, and even his name Vyasa Vyasa, has a certain similarity with Jesus. Then of the god Krishna it is said "He, the guardian of his flock, the sinless God, the Lord of the world consented to the death of (himself and) his race that he might fulfil the word of the soers' where, if we had shepherd and prophets, the comparison would be very striking. Another passage not connected with the Gita, but close to biblical phraseology, may be found in the description of the avenging spirits. 'If thou goest into the depths of the earth, or if thou shouldst fly above, or if thou fleest to the further side of the sea, still thou shalt find no escape from them', as compared with the Psalmist's words, 'Whither shall I fly into heaven Shall the uttermost parts of the sea?'

Compare also 'I am not crying in the wilderness,' followed by, 'Thou seest the faults of others, though they be no larger than mustard but thine own faults thou canst not see, though they be as large as a bulva (tree)'. As these comparisons have not, I think, been noticed before, I give them for what they are worth. Even the crucifixion has its analogy in the story of the stake saint (impaling being the equivalent of crucifixion) who was unjustly impaled with thieves, but he did not die like the thieves and so awakened the wonder of the royal guard. They went and told the king, who was frightened when he heard of it and came to the Saint on the stake and besought his forgiveness, which was granted, as the king had acted ignorantly. He is besung in all the worlds as the Impaled One. But all the rest of the story is grotesque. It is perhaps not impossible that there is here the echo of the Christian story.

"A curious historical sketch in the Epic relates that the cult of Krishna as one God was introduced after the notion of Unitarianism had been gained by three pilgrims, who went to an Albion in the North West and there found this religion practised by White Men. Professor Wober, despite the repeated statement that the White Island was located in the extreme North or North-West, referred this to Alexandria, and all sorts of suppositions have been made in regard to the locality, the three sages being identified with the Three Wise Men of the East, and the North West being referred to every Western land from Parthia to Rome. The legend is late and an obvious intrusion into the Epic. It lays stress on the Unity of God, rather than on the All god idea, though the latter is, of course, not given up, and the devotees of Krishna who insist on this idea call themselves Ekantinas or Unitarians. For myself, I am more inclined to believe that the Civnite faith of Kashmere (a philosophical deism) is here re-cast into Vishnuite form, for the sea to which the pilgrims come is merely the mythical milksea of the Himalayas, and Kashmere men are almost white as compared with Hindus. The doctrine taught shows no trace of Christianity but only of a belief in One God †"

\* Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 157-8

† Dr Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 159-161.

"As Krishna in the Gita says that there are very few who acknowledge him to be the Supreme God, so it is expressly stated that these Unitarians are few in number, in 712, 12. Such repeated admissions only bear out the belief, otherwise well supported, that Krishnism in the Gita and Einstein forms are two late developments, though the latter is the later."

"He who speaks to the divine man Krishna who in this poem, called the Lord's Recitation Bhagwat Gita (Gita) is imparting to his disciple the truths of a religion which in the Epic is recognized as essentially new. For the old religion was the worship of the Horables like popular divinity but in the Epic Krishna is represented as having but recently made claim to be the avatar of the Supreme God a claim not yet wholly recognized by other Epic characters and one which Krishna himself naively says is admitted only by a few persons. It is therefore of peculiar interest to find that there is a close parallel between the world of this Krishna and those of Christ's disciples." "Now it is true that the world bhakti scarcely occurs before the Epic and does not occur at all in the Krishnaitic songs before the Epic, for though it is found in one Upanishad yet there it is not love but devotion to a fearful God before whom 'one comes in fear', just as in the older Upanishads."

The essence of the ideal divine love may be said to be in the words of the Upanishads. It is a sacrifice of the human senses in the fire of self-control. The light of the knowledge of divine love is the glory of God. It cannot be attained by a man or a woman who hates the society of men and women, does not realise the affection of a son, daughter, brother, mother, father and all near and dear ones, where the great God's love is reflected and co-ordinated. Society carries the goodwill of the God above and the picture of ancient society is that of the contrast between heaven and hell. Necessarily there must be Ravana and Rama, Meghinada and Lakshmana, Bibhison and Bharata, Sagriva and Hanumana, Durjodhana and Yudhishthira, Dussasana and Bhima, Karna and Arjuna, Sakuni and Bidura, Bhishma and Sri Krishna, Drona and Drupada, Asvathama and Abhimanyu, Dhritarastra and Birata. Sri Krishna gave his best soldiers to Durjodhana and did not himself fight in the great battle in spite of insult and the evil intention of Durjodhana, but Bhishma in spite of his age and professions of friendship to the just cause failed to act up to his own standard whenever occasion arose and laid down his life for it, which Sri Krishna stated openly in the Kuru Court.

The discus, the favourite weapon of Sri Krishna, was called Radha Chakra as Radha loved it very much. Sri Krishna was invincible with this instrument of war. He killed the dreadful Asuras with it, and King Sisupala in one stroke. The very name Sisupala implies the head of youngsters, the principal objector to Sri Krishna occupying the first seat of honour in the sacrifice. It might mean that he did not believe

\* Dr Hopkins' 'India Old and New,' Footnote No. 1 of page 161

† Dr Hopkins 'India Old and New,' Footnote No. 1 of page 148



in a worship different from the old Vedic ideals. Sri Krishna was a new model of worship of divine love—GOD IS LOVE AND LOVE IS GOD. From him in love divine love originates, this is the gospel truth the great Epic preaches. The great incarnation of God comes down to earth for specific objects, as soon as they are fulfilled he must go through the gate of death but not through the diseased deaths of mortals. Sri Krishna and Bala Rama left the world while in concentration of mind. The death of Sri Krishna by the arrow of a hunter is a later dramatic development in the terms of Valmiki's first verse of inspiration and cannot be a historical fact.

European scholars have failed to see the all-important point, that Sri Rama and Sita and Sri Krishna and Radha are the most familiar gods of the general Hindus in India, since the days of the Upanishads. There are Upanishads which declare them to be supreme Gods. Sri Rama is worshipped in Seta Bindhi Rameshvara, Sri Krishna at Dwarka, Narayana at Bidarikrama and Radha Gobinda or Krishna at Jaypore and Brindaban, all famous shrines of the Hindus. Sri Krishna gave effect to force regulated by wisdom. Senseless violence on the part of the Kurus produced harm. This was the lesson of the great war of Kurukshetra.

The life of the Pandavas has personal aspects, legendary developments and religious consequences in the advanced stages of society. In the personal aspect the Pandavas were the co-adjutors of Sri Krishna and Drupada, etc., destroyers of Jarasandha, Duryodhana and his allies and established the kingdom of justice and benevolence. In the legendary developments of history they paved the way to establishing Sri Krishna as the divine God in place of Narayana by their following. Yudhishthira, as the founder of Krishna religion in India, left behind him a system of beliefs which has gained more disciples than any other creed in India. The epoch of the Kaliyuga is usually identified with the era of Yudhishthira, which is counted not from his birth but from the disappearance from the earth of all vicious tyrants and agnostics in the war of Kurukshetra. Sri Krishna when he fulfilled the object for which he came to earth did not remain but disappeared like a mirage and that was perhaps the era of Sri Krishna christened with the name of the just King of India, Yudhishthira, whose disappearance synchronised with it as the great Epic describes. This was 3102 B. C., but astronomers give the date of the war more than\* six centuries later. Professor Bhandarkar has shown that at the time of Patanjali's Mahabhasya Krishna worship attained some degree of prominence in India.

It will not be out of place to quote here some portions from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*'s article on Brahminism —

'One of the chief effects it produced in the worship of the old gods was the rapid decline of the authority of the orthodox Brahminical dogma, and a considerable development of sectarianism. Among the great variety of deities of the pantheon, Siva, Vishnu, and Parvati have since obtained by far the largest share of adoration, and it is in special accounts of the Siva, Vishnu, and Sakti sects rather than in an exposition of the Brahminical belief, that the religious history of India from about the beginning of our era can be dealt with satisfactorily. At that time the worship of Vishnu in his most popular avatar, in the person of Sri Krishna, appears to have received much countenance at the hands of the priests, with a view of counteracting the growing influence of Buddhism. The sectarian spirit gave gradually rise to a special class of works, the modern Puranas composed for the express purpose of promoting the worship of some particular deity.'\* (The particular deities are Jagannath, Subhadra and Balarama of Puri.)

'The modern god is represented as undergoing, for the benefit of mankind, a number of avatars or incarnations, ten of which are especially dwelt upon by the fervid imagination of his followers. The exact time at which those several episodes were incorporated into the cult of Vishnu cannot at present be ascertained. As they are for the most part conceived in a decidedly Brahminical spirit—the special object for which Vishnu assumes a human form being generally to deliver the people from the oppression of some wicked tyrannous prince,—it is probable that they were mostly introduced at a time when there was still some danger of the Kshatriyas defying the Brahminical rule. Of somewhat different origin were, perhaps two of Vishnu's most popular and important incarnations, viz., those in which he manifests himself in the persons of Sri Krishna and Rama, two heroes whose exploits are celebrated in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. It is possible that these warriors and their legendary achievements had been favourite subjects of heroic poetry for some time previous to the overthrow of the Kshatriyas and that, being already regarded by the latter as representative of Vishnu, they were afterwards recognized as such by the Brahmins, and thus gave rise to the system of Avatars.'†

Professor Wilson's observations are very interesting

'Now it is true that in the present constitution of Indian society the distribution of the periods of life, beyond that of the student, is never regarded except by a few, who prefer a life of lazy mendicancy, or by some half-crazed enthusiast, who thinks it possible to realise the letter of the law. The great body of the people, Brahmins included, pursue their worldly avocations as long as their faculties permit, spend the decline of life in the bosom of their families, and die peaceably and decently at home. But although the practice is discontinued, the doctrine remains and influences opinion, and devotional ceremonies, pilgrimage, penance, and abstract contemplation have an undue preponderance in the estimation of the people, even the best informed among them, over active duties and the precept of morality. As to the common people they have a still lower scale, and they find a ready substitute for the inconveniences of all moral restraint in the fervour of that faith which they place in Vishnu, and the unwearied perseverance with which they train a parrot or a starling to repeat his names, to articulate Krishna-Radha, or Sita-Ram.'‡

\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume IV, pages 209 and 210

† *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume IV, page 203

‡ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume IV, page 210

The Hindu tradition about the great Jagannath is worth mentioning here as it has great bearing on the death of Sri Krishna. King Indra Dyumna entrusted Visvakarma with making a figure of Jagannath with the bones of Sri Krishna at the instance of one great sage. The great artist of heaven told the king that he would make a stipulation with him before undertaking the work, that he would do his work behind closed doors and if he was at all interfered with he would leave the work. After a fortnight the king could not restrain his curiosity and opened the door of the temple and the great artist left the incomplete work in disgust. In that stage the incomplete figure is worshipped and every twelve years renovated. It is a worship of Brahma in Nirguna shape, having no hands or feet to perform the works of creation; these were all left to Subhadra, sitting in the middle as the Prakriti, as the name implies, the most beautiful, who worships the Mahattahva Balaram and Para-brahma Jagannath.

Early phallic worship was developed in the worship of divine love in Sri-Krishna and Radha, Sita and Rama and Hara and Gouri. With the martial and agricultural races of India, horses, cows, bulls, elephants, dogs and cheetah were found useful animals and they were the carriers of the gods and goddesses of India. The four handed Narayana, without a mate, ceased to be the popular god of India. Gods and goddesses without divine love cannot tell upon the religious sentiments of love. The Adikeshab of Benares, one of the oldest gods of the place, is almost deserted in a lonely place. The pilgrims used to visit the place first before they entered Benares but it is now seldom visited by them. This is the great change the Indian Epics effected on the people of India.

The learned historian Vincent Smith assigns the reign of Vasudeva to the early period after the death of Christ. The two great dynasties, the Kushan in Northern India and the Andhra in the tableland of the Deccan, disappear together almost at 226 A. D. (p. 289). He is positively of opinion "that Vasudeva was the last Kushan king who continued to hold extensive territories in India. After his death no trace of paramount power in Northern India could be traced. The settlements of the Abhiras appear to have been very ancient, their name is found with that of the Sudras in a dictum of Patanjali, second century B. C. (Keilhor Mahabhasya 1.252) (Indian Antiquary XLV II. p. 36)."\*

"The inscriptions of Vasudeva, mostly found at Mathura, certainly range in date from the year 74 to the year 98 of the era used in the Kushan age and indicate a reign of not less than twenty-five years. We may assume that his reign terminated in or about the year 230. K. P. Joyaswal holds Vasudeva, a contemporary of the Western satrap Rudrasena (A. D. 199-222) (J. B. O. Res. Soc. vi. page 22)." "Huvishka was succeeded by Vasudeva, whose thoroughly Indian name, a synonym

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\* Prof. V. A. Smith's 'Early History of India,' page 290 and Footnote No. 1

for Vishnu, is a proof of the rapidity with which the foreign invaders had succumbed to the influence of their environment' •

Sri Krishna Vasudeva was a historical character. It will be seen that the tradition of making the images of Jagannath etc., with the bones of Sri Krishna, Subhadra and Balarama and the building of the temple of Jagannath at Puri reconcile with the time. This was the memorial raised by the family of the great Vasudev family or their adherents. The allegory of Sri Krishna's death is significant. Jara (old age) with which the great sage Sukra cursed his son-in-law, Yajati, was personified as a hunter and killed by mistake Sri Krishna by shooting an arrow at his feet considering him to be a deer. The cause of his death seems to have been old age and nothing else.

Birth and death are the important features of a man's life, and Sri Krishna's birth took place in the prison of Kansa, the incarnation of malice. He was released from that prison by a miracle, as it were, through natural phenomena and the divine inspiration and courage of Vasudeva. He grew up not in any extraordinary manner but his boyhood was full of events which called for record. His mental endowments were quite normal to his age and race, but there was nothing of that narrow, prejudiced view of Kshatriya aristocracy in which he was born. He was brought up in a family of Vaisyas of Brindaban, who tended cows and offered milk and curd to the nation. His loving passion from boyhood to steal those delicacies by all sorts of mischievous pranks attracted the notice of all and made him the great favourite of the cowherd girls and matrons there. He was nursed in their milk of human love and realised what relief a parentless, forlorn child feels in the natural love and affection of others. He became the idol of their great affection. The loving image of Nanda's Gopal is still worshipped in India and believed to be the most beloved and powerful of all images of God.

His vision was normal to humanity and showed none of those co-regional defects which are peculiar to the caste system in India. A child, a helpless orphan as he was, claimed the sympathy of all irrespective of any relationship, in the great circle of loving Brindaban, free from the common sin of selfishness of affection. When the great tyrant Kansa was killed the people offered the throne left vacant to him, but he refused it and came into prominence. He has no personal ambitions of his own. The lasses of Brindaban could not tempt him to leave Mathura and live in Brindaban. The girls he loved in youth did not adorn the palace of love he built in Dwarka as his queens. He scaled those peaks of the moral life, the glaring temptations show him the evils he resisted,

the Epic shows the world the ethical qualities with which he was crowned and adorned.

In his life he gave up everything to the service of humanity—he sacrificed the best soldiers he raised. When their work was over, he realised that they must be destroyed and lent them to Durjodhana. He stood the great trial before the world when it cost the life of his beloved nephew Abhimanyu. He did not raise his voice against the shameful and cruel murder of the helpless youth Abhimanyu, nor did he take part in the war to revenge the great wrong. Here the divine and the human element are not in conflict but are blended in the character of Sri Krishna, which the great Epic still presents to the world. One can only know God as He is revealed, not in the doctrines of philosophy and religion but in the true example of divine character. The Epic presents this both from the theological and historical sides of the question.

### Gandhari.

The curse of the chaste lady Gandhari was more powerful than that of an ascetic Utamka, and Sri Krishna fell a victim to it. Gandhari's curse runs as follows :—

“On the thirty sixth year from this, O destroyer of Madhu, you will, after bringing about the death of your kinsmen and friends and sons, perish by disgusting means within the forest. The ladies of your family, deprived of sons, kinsmen, and friends, shall weep and cry even as these ladies of the Bharata family.” Vaishampayana continued—Hearing these words, the great Krishna, addressing the worshipful Gandhari, said to her these words, smilingly,—“There is none in the world, save myself, who can exterminate the Vrishnas. I know this well. I am trying to bring it about. In imprecating this curse, O you of excellent vows, you have helped me in the accomplishment of that work. The Vrishnas are incapable of being killed by others, whether human beings or Gods or Danavas. The Yadavas, therefore, shall be killed by one another.” After the Dashartha hero had said so, the Pandavas became stupefied. Stricken with anxiety, all of them became hopeless of life.”\*

“Krishna said—Arise, arise, O Gandhari, do not grieve. Through your fault, this huge destruction has taken place. Your son Durjodhana, was wicked, envious, and exceedingly arrogant. Praising his wicked acts, you thought them to be good. Highly ruthless, he was the embodiment of hostilities, and disobedient to the commands of the old. Why do you then attribute your own faults to me? Dead or lost, the person who grieves for what has already taken place suffers greater grief. By grieving one increases it twofold. A saintly woman bears children for the practice of austerities, the cow brings forth offspring for bearing burden, the mare brings forth her young for acquiring speed of motion, the Shudra woman bears a child for increasing the number of servitors, the Vaishya woman for increasing the number of keepers of cattle. A princess, however, like you, brings forth sons for being killed.”†

\* Stree Parva, Chapter XXV, verses 44—49

† Stree Parva, Chapter XXVI, verses 1—5,

## Kunti

The greatness of Kunti is described in *Ashramavasika Parva*

"Firmly resolved to retire into the forest, Kunti disregarded these lamentations of her sons. Drupadi and Subhadra followed their weeping mother in law, who was bent upon going into the forest. Highly and firmly resolved on retirement from the world, the blessed dams called on frequently looking at her weeping family. The Pandavas, with all their wives and servants, continued to follow her. Not minding their hot tears, Kunti addressed her children as follows:— "What you say, O mighty armed sons of Pandu is indeed, true. When you were all dispirited, I encouraged you all. Seeing that your kingdom was taken away from you by a game of dice, seeing that you all fall from happiness, seeing that you were governed over by kinsmen, I instilled courage and high thoughts into your minds. O foremost of men, I inspired you so that the sons of Pandu might not be lost, so that their fame might not be gone. You are all equal to Indira. Your prowess resembles to that of the very celestials. I acted thus so that you had not to live, depending upon others. I instilled courage into your hearts so that you who would be the foremost of all righteous men, who were equal to Vasava might not again go into the forest and live in misery. I instilled courage into your hearts so that this Bhima who had the strength of ten thousand elephants and whose prowess and manliness were widely known, might not sink into insignificance and ruin. I instilled courage into your hearts so that this Vijaya who was born after Bhimasena, and who was equal to Vasava himself might not be cheerless. I instilled courage into your hearts so that Nakula and Sahadeva who were always devoted to their elders might not be weakened and rendered cheerless by hunger. I acted thus in order that this lady of well-developed forms and of large size might not suffer the wrongs inflicted on her in the public hall without being avenged. Before you all, O Bhima, trembling all over like a plaintain tree during her catamantal period and after she had been won at dice, Dushshana through folly, dragged her as if she were a slave. I knew all this. Indeed the family of Pandu had been subjugated (by foes). The Kurus viz., my father in law and others were cheerless when she desirous of a protector, bewailed like a shoosproy. When she was dragged by her fair locks by the sinful Dushshana without little intelligence I lost my senses, O king. Know, that for increasing your energy, I instilled that courage into your hearts by reciting the episode of Vidula. O my sons, I instilled courage into your hearts, O my sons, so that the family of Pandu represented by my children, might not be lost. The sons and grandsons of that person who brings a family to infamy never succeed in acquiring the regions of the righteous. Indeed, the ancestors of the Kaurava race were in danger of losing those happy regions which had become theirs. O my sons, as for myself I enjoyed the great fruits of that sovereignty which my husband had won before. I made large gifts. I duly drank the Soma juice in sacrifice. It was not for my own sake that I had urged Vasulova with the stirring words of Vidula. It was for your sake that I had asked you to follow that advice. O my sons I do not wish to enjoy the fruits of that sovereignty which was acquired by my children. O you of great power, I wish to attain those happy regions by my penances where my husband went. By rendering obedient service to my father in law and mother in-law, both of whom wish to take up their residence in the forest observing penances. I wish, O Yudhishthira, to exhaust my body. You desist from following me, O foremost son of Kuru's race along with Bhima and others. Let your understanding be always devoted to virtue. Let your mind be always great."

\* *Ashramavasika Parva* page 19, Chapter XIV verses 29—32

† The Mahabharata *Ashramavasika, Parva, Chapter XVII, pages 19 20, verses 1—21.*

Vijaya was originally the name of Arjuna. His heroism entitled him to the epithet of Arjuna, by which another ancient well-known hero was Kartavirajarjuna. The cause of Kunti's being in favour of the fight was given. She had high ideals for her action; the proud tyrant should not be allowed to indulge in his excesses leaving a bad example but he should be crushed so that others would not follow him. That was the lesson of the war. The real Epic did not aim at describing the details of the skill of the individual Generals of the Kurus. The war Parvas were all additions of a much later date to extoll the glory of the kings who fell in the great battle to their descendants who ruled the different provinces of India. The cause of the degradation of the Dravids, Abhiras, Pundras and Shavars of Orissa are given in the Asvamedha Parva, Chapter XXIX, which formed a part of Anu-Gita —

"The Brahmana said — About it is cited the ancient story, O lady, of the discourse between Kartavirya and the Ocean "

### Yudhisthira.

The most towering and sublime figure amongst the characters of the Mahabharata which leaves an abiding impression, is that of Yudhisthira. He is virtue and justice incarnate. He was subjected to every kind of temptation to which a great prince like him was then liable. Besides there was a very strong combination of circumstances in which temptation to dishonesty was pre-eminent as he was fully subjected to it. The test reveals that particular ethical quality in which he might reasonably have been expected to fail.

Life was not interpreted in terms of the material; it must be described in terms of the spiritual. Man is addicted to temptation for personal success, but to the cultured ambition seems to have lain in the cause of the amelioration of the general public and the country at large. To wait for the proper time and opportunity was the aim and object of life of Yudhisthira rather than to attempt accomplishment anyhow by sheer machinations or otherwise. For the sake of the sacred trust which the Almighty Father imposed in him as a king he gave up everything which others hold dear and sacred in order to be true to the ideal of self-denunciation in the midst of all sorts of allurements to which sovereignty was exposed.

His temptations and sacrifices could not be of an ordinary type, for Yudhisthira was the son of Dharma (Virtue) and not of God, like Christ, wherein lies the real difference between Hinduism and Christianity. His own god-father, Dharma (Virtue), was found testing him and adding

strength to his vigour and activities. Virtue in the form of a Jaksha killed his brothers, or the four attributes, to make him realise and to hear from him the answers to the questions put by Virtue to give him back the brothers or attributes duly renovated. This is what is called the soul vision of a man. It is only obtained when ordinary conditions are suspended and gone and they are re-established. The questions of knowledge and feeling were then united. Feeling is but an inference of anything and not direct knowledge. Inference is drawn from the descriptions of others. It is not the ecstatic state of soul lying side by side with the ordinary and regular sense of perfection.

In Yoga Philosophy the devotee tries to open his inner eye, closing the outer one, but in the case of Yudhisthira both eyes were open at the same time. His ecstasy was involved in a trance or hallucination. A man who has true knowledge of God speaks of divine things with that intimacy with which others speak of material things. God is not a question of conception but perception. The consciousness of God is unique. He is not an ordinary human being. His glory is reflected in the heart of man till it is revealed in his face and strength of mind. The appearance of man is not a descent from God above but an ascent from the beast man below. Yudhisthira is not a man belonging to any human race but is the ideal man as one sees him and so with all his brothers in respect of his qualities, personified as it were. Incarnation is a descent of the just God to the earth as a human being and its opposite theory is reflected in Yudhisthira and Sudarshana, who went to heaven in person, which neither Rama nor Balarama, incarnations of God, or Sri Krishna, God himself, could do.

It is after all the great question of the starting point of a real conception of God. Incarnation is but an explanation of the theory of evolution, but there is a great difference between incarnation and manifestation. Incarnation means that God is revealed in a cosmic process as distinct from the manifestation of natural objects from the lower parts to man in Hindu theology. It is not a question of setting up so many gods from trees, serpents, fishes, tortoise, boar, dwarf, axed-Rama, Rama with bow and arrow, ploughed Balarama and Sri Krishna. The final emancipation of soul rests with the question not of personal love and ambition of things or incarnation holding power under the name of universal love, but of raising the Pandavas to the throne of India with Yudhisthira at their head to represent the incarnation of virtue and not of God in the presence and guidance of Divine love manifested in Sri Krishna, who was not an incarnation of God but God himself of divine love. That divine love has its counterpart in Nature is reflected in



Draupadi, the queen of the earth, the great Lakshmi or prosperity which sustain the great redeemers, the Pandavas

The form of incarnation is merely a cloak to disguise the real personality. Virtue is disguised in Yudhisthira. Theism recognises that the logic of fact is more imperative than that of theory. It recognises something divine in every man and woman in the past and present. It believes that the human being is in the process of becoming ideal, which his nature prophesies. It seeks to establish a sort of union between ideal man or woman and God. The conception of God is traced in magnified humanity. This may be true in some respect, but one cannot deny that spiritual experience is of greater value than this. The experience of the soul is as real as that of the body and senses. The sun and the earth are the centres of planetary movements and of gravity, determining the movements of all bodies within the area of each of its influences. In the case of man the will is the centre. Man's character is merely dependent on the internal influences, the power of the will regulates external influences. The individuality of a man or a woman is not determined solely either by what one is represented to be by his body or by external influences but by all the movements, proceeding as they do from and returning to one independent centre called self, constantly modified in the process of action.

In the higher evolution of man and woman the emergence of a moral ideal is an imperative stage in the process of humanity. This doctrine is a helpful means to the rise of animal propensities into the sphere of moral and spiritual existence. It helped to abhor sin and sinful desires and expiate the sins of previous or present lives in the religious ceremonies and sacrifices the great priests advised. It helped the priestly power to be preserved by the easy method of participating in the gifts of confession and to rise higher in the estimation of the cultured class. Till at last religion and morality for their individual vitality depended on the real distinction between the individual self (Atma) and the supreme self (Parmatma).

A painting depends on the variety of colours in delineating the characters it represents. The Pandavas are no more than prismatic colours, all resolvable into the single ray of white light of virtue of Yudhisthira. The prism of the great Epic which separates them is as much a reality as the single ray of light and the differences, therefore, are equally real.

The urge of nature is not to satisfy the senses but to seek the unity of individual self with the supreme self through the selfish prism of

love which separates the divine love of Sri Krishna through the union of Draupadi. At the end Yudhishthira alone emerged from the great illusions to rise in heaven in the single ray of divine light of Heavenly love, and the prism of earthly love represented in Draupadi's union broke with the four Pandavas and disappeared for ever.

There is the truth in it, but its adoption as a historical fact means the destruction and not the preservation of both morality and religion. Gospels are not biographies in the true sense of the word, they are but character sketches, and as such they are of the greatest value to arrive at a clear conception of virtue in the personality of Yudhishthira. The divine light was his guide and the question of historical criticism lies outside the scope of the Indian Epic. The reflected light of faith is of greater value to theology than the light of facts of history. The story of Walter Raleigh's destruction of his History of the World may be the fitting illustration and reply to the ungenerous critic.

The Pandavas were born Kshatriyas and so was Sri Krishna, but they were least like what one can call a born Kshatriya of the time. They were not imbued with any hatred of the Brahmanas or of any class in particular. They were most distinctly cosmopolitan. The Pandavas caught the spirit of the master mind of Sri Krishna and formed eternal friendship through the marriage union of Draupadi, not in the ordinary sense of an earthly marriage but of spiritual union. One may not realise its true import, but the Indian mass instinctively bow down in the deepest reverence of which they are capable before the moral and spiritual grandeur of such a union. The system of marriage which was called Svayambhara was most distinctly cosmopolitan and interpreted the mind of the age in which it flourished. In Epic the moral grandeur of Sri Krishna transfixes and transfuses earthly love into Divinity. He came to the world in the prison life of his parents. His life was at the mercy of a tyrant, but he was rescued by his father by divine instinct. He grew up under the fostering care of Nanda and Joshoda, the adopted parents.

The hero of the Epic, Yudhishthira, went to heaven in person, which Sri Krishna and Arjuna could not do. To declare that the Pandavas and Draupadi were ordinary human beings is to leave out those very important characteristics introduced to explain the mysteries of Nature and God in the spiritual domain of existence. Their supreme places in the religious life of Ancient India transcend every other consideration, and it was for that they were not begotten but made by the Epic authors through the help of gods according to the ideals which found

favour in their time. It must be understood that the newer theological thought has by no means repudiated the facts presented in the personalities of the Pandavas and their queen, but they freely accepted the hypothesis of evolution with the important proviso that for the process which the theory of evolution describes, the God which the religious consciousness perceives is demanded and conceived for the emancipation of the Soul in the case of the four Pandavas and Draupadī and transmission in person to hold union with the supreme soul of God in Heaven. These are the two sides of emancipation, and the third translation to Heaven in the cruel fight of passion in the religious field of Kurukshetra to absolve the sins of commission and omission on the parts of chivalrous but vain-glorious Bhīma, Drona, Karna and Duryodhana. The advice of the wise man Yudhishthira is the ethics of morality and love preached in the great Epic, a fact which should not be lost sight of.

"Yudhishthira said — Having entered into such a pledge in the presence of all the pious and good men, who can now dare break it for the sake of a kingdom in this world? For in my opinion to a respectable person death is not more serious than an act of transgression in order to gain a kingdom. O hero, you desired to burn my hand at the time of the play, you were, however, prevented by Arjuna and you only squeezed your mace. O Bhīma, if you had done it, this calamity could not then befall us. O Bhīma, conscious as you are of your prowess, why did you not say so before we entered into such an agreement? Having already burdened myself with the pledge made at that time what is the use of your speaking to me these harsh words now? O Bhīmasena, this was my great grief that I could not do anything when I saw Jaymasena (Draupadī) persecuted in that way. O Bhīma, my heart burns on account of this, as if I have drunk some poisonous liquid. O foremost of the Bharata race, having made the pledge in the presence of the Kurus there, I am unable now to violate it. Wait for the return of our better days, as scatterers of seed wait for the harvest. When one that has been first injured succeeds in revenging himself upon his enemy at a time when the latter's enmity has borne fruits and flowers, he is regarded as one who has accomplished a great deed by his prowess. Such a brave man earns undying fame. Such a man obtains great prosperity. His enemies bow down to him, and his friends gather round him, as the celestials cluster round Indra for protection. Know my promise cannot be made false. I regard Dharma as superior to life itself and divinity. Kingdoms, sons, fame and wealth, all these do not come up even to a sixteenth part of truth."

Nor is this all. The lesson he read to his beloved accomplished wife Draupadī should be written in golden letters for it discloses the aim of the virtuous man. How a man is led by a woman to transgress the law of God is vividly described, which even Milton failed to do —

"Yudhishthira said — O Yajmaseni, your speech is sweet, clear and full of nice expressions, we have listened to it, you speak of atheism. O Princess, I never act being desirous of the fruits thereof, I distribute a thing which should be distributed and I perform a sacrifice which should be performed. I perform, as best as I can, O Krishna, what a householder should do, not caring for the fruits of virtue but for not

transgressing the Vedas and seeing the conduct of the pious. My mind and nature, O Krishna, are naturally bent upon virtue, that vile trader of virtue, the worst of the virtuous, who wishes to reap the fruits of virtue, does never obtain them, nor does a vicious minded person, for his scepticism, who doubts a virtuous act, having accomplished it." "You should not, O blessed queen with a foolish mind either doubt or censure the Providence or (His act). The fool, who doubts religion and disregards virtue and being proud of the proof of his own reasoning, does not receive it from others, considers all these sages who look upon the future as present, like a mad man. He considers the external world as conducive to the gratification of senses and is blind to everything else." "Doubt not, O Krishna, the ancient religion which is followed by the good and formulated by the omniscient and omnipotent Vishnu. O Draupadi, virtue is the only raft and nothing else to those who wish to go to heaven, like a ship to the merchant wishing to cross the ocean." "For not seeing the fruit you should not doubt religion or the gods, you should perform sacrifices assiduously and charities without any insolence. Acts have their fruits in this world and virtue is eternal, as said by Kashyapa, Dharma told all this to his sons. O Krishna let your doubt be destroyed like dews meditating upon all this. Let your scepticism yield to faith. Do not speak ill of God who is the lord of all creatures, learn to know Him bow to Him let not your understanding be such. Never disregard that Supreme being O Krishna, by whose mercy the mortals, by pious observances, become immortals."

Yudhishthira's reply to Bhima's expostulations breathes the spirit of wisdom and truth as well as his great character. He was not a coward as ordinary people would take him to be finding him an idle spectator of the rude persecution of his beloved wife before his very eyes at the hands of his enemies.

"Yudhishthira said —O descendant of Bharata, O mighty armed hero, what you say is true. O best of speakers listen (also) to what I say. O descendant of Bharata, O Bhimasena, the greatly sinful deeds that one wants to perform depending only on his courage become a source of pain to him. But O mighty armed hero, whatever is performed with (due) deliberation, with well directed prowess, with all (necessary) appliances and with much previous thought, is (always) seen to be successful (at the end). The celestials themselves favour such acts. Hear some thing about the act which you think should be at once done from your pride of strength and restlessness of mind. Bhurisrava Salva, the powerful Jarasandha, Bhishma, Drona, Karana, the mighty son of Drona (Ashwathama). The invincible sons of Dhritarastra, Duryodhana and others,—all are accomplished in arms and ever ready for battle. Those kings and rulers of the world, who have been injured by us, have all taken the side of the Kurus and their affection has grown towards them. O descendant of Bharata, they are engaged in seeking to do good to Duryodhana and not to us. With their treasury full and army large they will try their best in the war (to defeat us). All the officers of the Kuru army with their sons and relatives have been honoured by Duryodhana with the presentation of wealth according to proper divisions. These heroes have been much honoured by Duryodhana. My firm conviction is that they will give their lives in battle for him. O mighty armed hero, though the behaviour of Bhishma Drona and the high souled Kripa is the same (to both parties), yet it is my firm conviction that they would sacrifice in battle

their lives, than which there is nothing dearer in this world, so that they might pay off (their debt) in the shape of royal favours which they enjoy. They are all masters in celestial weapons and they are all devoted to virtue. My opinion is that they cannot be vanquished even by the celestials with Vasava (Indra) at their head. There is Karna, the great car warrior, who is impetuous, ever angry, invincible, accomplished in all weapons and encased in impenetrable armour. Without first defeating in battle all these foremost of men, you cannot, unaided as you are, kill Durjodhana."\*

"To say well is good, but to do well is better,  
Do well is the spirit, and to say well is the letter,  
If do well and say well were fitted in one frame,  
All were won, all were done, and got were all the gain."

The example of constancy in every act of Yudhishthira confirmable to reason, his evenness in all things, his absolute disregard of empty fame, his serenity of countenance to realise the depth of things and the pros and cons of every matter, invested him with the crown of piety and justice. What greater reward can a mortal man seek than doing what is good and just to the world at large as to himself and to be blessed with peace of mind, an inestimable boon. It is the rich reward of duty fulfilled. The goddess of prosperity tried him to see if he were a man wishing for nothing but to be crowned with glory by any means just as at the games of Olympia. Riches and kingdom bring in their train a sort of danger, temptation, sin and trouble. The wise Solomon said "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." This self-control is the real monarchy of the spiritual world with which the ancient Hindu world was more concerned than with the material sphere of actions. Success in thyself is the best of all, says the well-known old Norse ballad. Vyasa's conception of the eternal man (Dharma) is Yudhishthira, and Draupadi is the incarnation of Maya, the creator of the moral and spiritual world.

The conduct of Durjodhana and the counsel of his friend Karna have amply proved that there was nothing more daring than ignorance. Riches are blind and those who set their hearts on them are rendered blind as well, for love of money is a kind of disease. The love of pleasure is at the root of it and makes man despicable. The gift of God is not riches, as lay people are made to believe, but intellect. It is said in the words of Vidura, the wise minister of the Kuru Court who was referred to in the table of contents as famous for his wisdom

"The Gods do not look after men with club in hands, like herdsmen. To those they want to protect, they give intelligence. In proportion as a man is inclined towards virtue, his wishes meet with success. There is no doubt about it."†

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\* The Mahabharata, Chapter XXXVI, Vana Parva, page 54, verses 5-10

† The Mbh Udyoga Parva, Chapter XXXV, verses 40-41

No better example of a foolish son and a blind father not correcting him can be found than that of Duryodhana and Dhritarastra, which the great Epic furnishes. How then can it be a work reciting the glory of the Kurus? The ethics of morality according to the saying of the wise Vidura, are as follows (quoted from the same chapter) —

'Gold is known by fire, one of good birth by his behaviour, an honest man by his conduct, a hero in times of panic, a patient man during the time of poverty, and friends and enemies during the seasons of difficulties and dangers. Old age destroys beauty, patience helps death, life overcomes envy, virtue overcomes passion, prosperity, association with the vulgar good manners lust, modesty, vanity, everything. Prosperity has for its source good deeds, it increases owing to activity, and takes root owing to skill and continues its existence owing to self-control. Eight qualities glorify a man viz., wisdom, good birth, self-restraint, learning, strength, littleness of speech, gift to the best of his power and gratitude. But, O dear, one thing alone can make all these great qualities come together. When a king honours a man, all the qualities shed lustre on him. These eight O king in this world of human beings, are considered as the marks of heaven. Of these four are the attributes of the good and the honest man follow the other four. Sacrificial ceremonies, gifts, study, and devotion,—these four are followed by the good. Self-control, truth, kindness and humanity,—these four are also the attributes of the good. Sacrificial ceremonies, study, gift, devotion, truth, forgiveness, mercy and contentment—these are the eight ways to virtue according to the Smṛiti. The first four of these may be followed from motives of vanity, but the last four do not exist in those that are not great. That one is not in assembly where there are no old men. Those are not old men who do not speak of virtue. That is not virtue where truth does not exist, and that is not truth where deceit prevails. Truth, beauty, learning, knowledge, good birth, good manners, strength, wealth, heroism, and ability to talk on diverse topics,—these ten have their origin in heaven." "He that assimilates the wisdom of the wise is himself wise, and he who is wise by doing acts, both virtuous and conducive to worldly benefits, succeeds in gaining happiness. That act should be done by one during the day which will enable him to live in comfort during the night, and that should be done in eight months which will enable one to live in comfort throughout the year. That act should be done during the early years of life, which will enable one to live in comfort during old age. That act should be done in this life which will enable one to live in happiness after death. People speak well of that food which has been digested. They speak well of that wife whose youth has passed away, and of that hero who has come off victorious in the battle, and of that ascetic who has gone over to the other side (of life). The hole, that one seeks to stop by wealth acquired by foul means, remains uncovered, and others come into existence in other places. The preceptor is the controller of those who have their souls under restraint, the king is the controller of those who have bad souls, and Yama, the son of Vivasvata is the controller of those who sin in secret. The greatness of Rishis, of rivers, of the banks of rivers and of the noble-minded cannot be concealed, as also the wickedness of a woman. One attached to the worship of the twice born, one that makes gifts, one who behaves generously towards his cousins and the Kshatriya of good manners rules the earth for ever. These three, viz., the brave, the wise, and those who know how to protect others, pluck flowers of gold from the earth. Acts performed by means of the intellect are the best, those performed by the arms come next, O Bharata, those by the thighs are bad, while those performed by carrying loads are the worst. Having entrusted your

kingdom to Durjodhana, Shakuni, and the fool Dusasana and Karna, how can you hope for prosperity? The Pandavas, who are possessed of every virtue, O best among the race of Bharata, depend on you as their father. Do you also depend on them as your sons \*\*\*

He who fights against the decrees of wisdom, adds nothing but annoyances and misery to life, but he who follows the path of the wise and labours diligently, is hardly ever disappointed. The wise Vidura cited an old discourse immediately after it which has a great bearing on the mystery of the plot as well as on the secret tenets of religion to try the virtuous. One can then realise the difference between the contending character of the Kurus and the Pandavas, the one party was openly reviling the other—the other bore them patiently. This is the discourse of the son of Atri to the Saddhyas or Devas in Chapter XXXVI, Udyoga Parva, verses 4—21. This is the ideal with which Yudhisthira scored success and went to heaven in person. If anything goes against it, it must be an interpolation. For instance, Yudhisthira did not tell a lie in the death of Drona even in thought. Drona did not die leaving his arms with the false report of his son's death, having heard it from the mouth of Yudhisthira. It was a base manufacture of a foolish dramatist and proof is not wanting. Krishna, who was the eye-witness, described the battle before his father which cannot but be true and unvarnished.

"In that battle between Drona and the son of Prishata, the kings assembled from various realms were nearly rooted out. That furious battle lasted for five days. At the conclusion of that period, Drona, exhausted succumbed to Dhristadyumna."†

How then can Mahabharata be a work meant to recite the glory of the Kurus, and how did the Pandavas win the battle by foul means? Who can be happy without hard labour and application? Men are not taught virtue and a love of independence in the court life of a royal home or throne, and it is for this the heroes of the two Indian Epics were exiled. What they learnt by actual experience was put into practice in their government to make their subjects happy and dutiful, if not religious. Nature brings good out of evil, and if one expunges from one's life unhappy experiences then the relish of the enjoyment of happiness will be frustrated. Happiness is the fruit of forbearance and patience, and the life of the Pandavas and Rama bear ample testimony to it. The great English poem "Paradise Lost" begins with that idea

"Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world and all our woe "

\* The Mbh Udyoga Parva, Chapter XXXV, Verses 40—59 and 66—77

† The Mbh, Chapter LX, Ashvamedha Parva, verses 17-18, p 72.

Prudence and forethought are roots from which the good and virtuous eliminate sin and passion

“ 'Tis a physic  
That's bitter to sweet end. '  
(“ Measure for Measure” Act IV, Scene 6)  
‘ Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head ’  
(“ As You Like It,” Act II Scene I )

So Shakespeare said, and Vyasa illustrated it in the characters of the Pandavas. Yudhisthira blushed several times as a good and honourable character full of fortitude and forethought and he was praised by the wise Vidura for his wonderful conduct at the dice play. That was one of the hardest examinations which Yudhisthira passed with credit, and Vidura gave him a certificate of great merit. The main object of the dice play was exposed in his words —

“ Vidura said.—O Yudhisthira, O best of the Bharata race, know this to be my opinion that he who is defeated by sinful means need not be pained for such defeat. You know every rule of Dharma. Dhananjaya (Arjuna) is ever victorious in battle. Bhishma is the slayer of foes. Nakula is the gatherer of wealth. Sahadeva has administrative talents, Dharmya is the best of all men learned in the Vedas, and the virtuous Drupadi is learned in Dharma and Artha. You are all attached to one another and you all feel delight at one another's presence, enemies cannot separate you from one another, and you are all contented. O descendant of Bharata, for this patient abstraction from the worldly possessions will be of great benefit to you. No enemy, even if he be like Sakra (Indra), will be able to stand it. You were instructed on the mountains of Himalaya by Meru Savarni. You were instructed in Varanavata by Krishna Dwaipayana (Vyasa), on the Vrigu mountain by Rama, on the banks of the Drisadwati by Sambhu (Siva). You have also received instructions from the great Rishi Ishta on the Anjana mountains. You became a disciple of Bhrgu on the banks of the Kalmashi. Narada and your this priest Dharmya will be now your instructors. Do not abandon the excellent lessons, ever adored by the Rishis, as regards the next world. O sons of Pandu, you surpass in intelligence even Pururava, the son of Ila, in strength all other kings, and in virtue even the Rishis. Resolve earnestly to win the victory which is the attribute of Indra, to control anger which is the attribute of Yama to give in charity which is the attribute of Kuber and to control all passions which is the attribute of Varuna. Obtain the power of gladdening from the moon, the power of sustaining all from the water, forbearance from earth, energy from the whole of the solar disc, strength from the winds, and aidance from the creatures. Welfare and immunity from disease be yours. I hope to see you return (in all safety). O Yudhisthira, act properly and duly in all seasons—in the time of distress, in that of difficulty, and in respect of everything. O son of Kunti, O descendant of Bharata, with our permission depart. Blessings be on you. None can say that you have done anything sinful before. We hope to see you return in safety and crowned with success.”



In Yudhishthira the theory and practice of morality were united. He was courageous and brave as a lion and timid as a hare as occasion demanded—the two contrary things reconciled in him and dignified him as worthy of divinity in his life time. He was a man who did no one any mischief or injury though quite able to do so if he liked. He was not a man to retaliate for any wrongs gratuitously inflicted upon him. He depended on Heaven for justice and guidance like a husbandman, who when met with a bad year did not give up the profession but depended upon the next year for reparation. In Hindu ideals brothers are co-operators and Rama had such bretheren and Yudhishthira was equally blessed with such brothers.

In Hindu ideals woman is the swallow of a spring of prosperity, and Draupadi was such a woman. The Pandavas were discovered resurrected as it were from the tragedy of the lac house to the utter amazement of the conspirators at the Svayambara Hall. The Pandavas established their claims to the paternal throne by the feats of their arms to defeat the assembled monarchs and eventually ruled the earth with glory and chivalry. What a curious transformation in the current Mahabharata seems to be made by dramatists. Old things become new again in the course of time. There is nothing which can continue to please all men in all times. How radically bad is the nature of man, for otherwise he would stand in need of no laws to restrain him.

Every man is the maker of his own fortune. A man can govern and control all physical influences if he is endowed with forethought and determination. He is not merely a creature of circumstance, fate or a slave to time. The true dignity of a man lies in the consciousness that he can grasp the revolving wheel of fortune or time and free himself from the chain that binds him to it. Such a man was Yudhishthira, whereas Duryodhana depended on the powers of others and he could not avoid acting differently, as he did, under the circumstances. The mere reality of life without the charm of fancy would be devoid of zest to Duryodhana. It brought within his breast many vain fears and idle hopes which called up the gay, flattering hue of a rainbow rather than any terror of consequences. He never knew or tried to accommodate himself in such a way as would give him peace and cheerfulness instead of anxiety and trouble. He knew nothing of that resignation and contentment to which Yudhishthira was used. How then can the Mahabharata be a work reciting the glory of the Kurus?

The gross misconduct of Durjodhana could not be overlooked and he was taken to task even by Dhritarashtra

"Dhritarashtra said, O wicked minded Durjodhana, O wretch, destruction has already overtaken you when you insult in such language a wife of the Kuru chiefs, — especially this wedded wife Draupadi ""

How then can the great Epic be meant to recite the glory of the Kurus? The great author of the great Epic did not allow his heroes and heroines to shed tears over their misfortunes after the dice play, but the enemies were dumbfounded by their unconcernedness and natural phenomena made Dhritarashtra appeal to Draupadi to take boons from him to right the great wrong. How then can the great Epic be a work for reciting the glory of the Kurus? Durjodhana hid himself in the lake house, perhaps built purposely for any untoward event, when all the best Generals on whom he relied were killed and chance of victory was gone. That was the suicide of chivalry and glory of Durjodhana and to allow such a man to live would be a slur and setting a bad example to the future generation of kings of India and it was for this Yudhishthira did not comply with the request of Durjodhana to spare his life. He called upon him to fight with anyone he chose and the issue of the battle would be decided accordingly.

This was a great bait and he agreed to fight the great adversary of his youth, Bhishma, whom he envied for his great strength and whom he could not destroy in his youth after many attempts. He was defeated and killed, but even to make the death a little dramatic the appointment of Asvathama to destroy the Pandavas so that he could hear of it before his death was made. The cruel deeds of Asvathama and Kripa in the dead of night as followers of Saiva to undo the works of Krishna, of gagging the heroes who killed Drona and others while sleeping in their camps, were not consistent with the rules and canons of the Ancient Indian Military Code of War and precedence. It could only be possible as an instance of a heinous crime. How then can the great Epic be a work reciting the glory of the Kurus?

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" — Philippians iv, 8

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life" — James i, 12

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\* The Mahabharata, Shabha Parva, Chapter LXXI, verse 25.

## Draupadī

"O woman ! lovely woman ! nature made thee  
 To temper man, we had been brutes without you.  
 Angels are painted fair, to look like you.  
 There's in you all that we believe of Heaven,  
 Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,  
 Eternal joy, and everlasting love "  
 (Thomas Otway's "Venice Preserved," Act II )

The most novel and original creation of the Mahabharata is princess Draupadī. Her marriage with the five Pandavas has been the subject-matter of discussion in ancient Puran literature and is a veritable Sphinx-like riddle to the world. The picture of a cultured and high-souled princess sprung from an ancient royal family of Panchala, famous for chivalry and power, lofty and noble in her bearing, of the strictest chastity and holiness of character, intelligent and independent, courageous and indomitable alike as an Empress and as an exile in the fearful lonely woods, ever confident and optimistic from her upright and unblemished life, being the common wife of five brothers, has always puzzled both the Oriental and Occidental world. They have, in vain, ransacked everything and racked their brains to solve the riddle. In their attempts to do it, some have resorted to casuistry and sophistry, some to mythological mysticism, some to poetic creations, and some to bold imaginations of dramatic inventions.

Successive ages have made their contributions to the development of an unique heroine in the character of Draupadī, adding as it did, layer after layer of incongruous accretions in such a manner as to make it altogether fanciful and enigmatical, being—although there is no mention of any such heroine in the enumeration of characters in the original table of contents—in the nature of a forecast of all the principal *dramatis personae* (principal personages) of the great Epic.

Whatever influences might have gone to the making of this nonpareil character and whatever motives or imaginations might have accentuated it or found it so very necessary for reform in the great ideal of a princess worthy of occupying the place of an Empress of India, Draupadī stands pre-eminent as a master-creation of a model princess, an emblem of divine love and piety in flesh and blood as real as can be, representing as it were, the goddess of prosperity. She is an ideal Empress and housewife, whom the accredited heroine Kuntī, her mother-in-law, cannot but admire—a tribute a daughter-in-law seldom gets in a Hindu

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household. She is courageous and averse to servile submission to any unjust domination of the husband or his senior uncle or the king of a kingdom. She will not hesitate to question if Yudhishthira had the right to stake her at the dice play after having lost himself to slavery, but will gladly and patiently follow him to exile in the forests. She is meek and submissive, courageous and bold, as occasion demands. While in danger in the royal seraglio she seeks protection from the senior female members, but when she is exposed in the dice-play hall in the full limelight of the royal assemblage with the senior old Dhritarastra at the head, she boldly arraigns the august personages, questions the legality of their decision, politely insinuates their evil motives and gently rebukes them for their insensate conduct. A great heroine of a great Epic of India, she is the combination of all the good qualities of lofty womanhood, without even a distant parallel in any other literature of the world.

The great Indian Epic has shown her in three different aspects, the historical, the mythological and the dramatic. The nucleus of the historical aspect of the character of Draupadi is found in the story of her birth in the family of Panchala. The long-standing feud between the neighbouring kingdoms of the Kurus and the Panchals at the time of king Drupad became further accentuated for non-fulfilment of the promise between the two friends Drona and Drupad, made while they were pupils at their instructor's place. This eventually developed into a fight between the Panchals and Drona at the head of the Kurus. Drupad lost half his kingdom.

Bhisma and Drona are new creations of the dramatic Mahabharata. It was Bhisma who engaged the great Drona as the teacher of the Kuru and Pandava princes and became a king of the place called Ahichhatra, defeating Drupad with the help of those pupils and the Kuru army, secured through the instrumentality of Bhisma. It could not be so childish an affair as was described in the great Epic. Hastinapur became the centre of a military institution founded by Bhisma under the tutelage of Drona and Kripa. This Kripa was the son of Goutama and the daughter, Krepī, was the wife of Drona. The great warrior Asvathama was the son of Drona.

This is the cause of Draupadi's birth to recover the lost kingdom of Drupada. Draupadi was raised by a sacrifice as well as her brother Dhristadyumna to kill the Kurus and Drona, to wreak revenge as it were. Drupad, in order to recover it, performed a sacrifice and was blessed with two sons and a daughter, Draupadi, to achieve his object. Dhristadyumna and Shikhandi were the sons and Draupadi

was the only daughter, who, it is said, rose out of the sacrificial fire as it were, and was instrumental in destroying hosts of kings, including Drona, in the great war of Kurukshetra. Draupadi's Svayambara became the venue for the meeting of the Kurus and the Pandavas. The Pandavas were said to have been burnt in the dreadful fire at the lac house of Baranabata, but they were dramatically discovered by the Kurus before the royal assemblage. Not only was the guilt of the Kurus exposed before the royal assembly but they were defeated by the Pandavas in open fight inspite of the great help they had received from the powerful Kshatriya princes assembled there. Sri Krishna's words convinced the assembly that the Yadavas and the Panchalas had combined themselves by marriage to recover the kingdom for the Pandavas, who were sought to be destroyed by the Kurus

The love of Draupadi was the love of duty to save the country and recover the glory of her father, and for the good of the world. Draupadi was called Yajna-Seni, or the creative body of the acts of sacrifice, as she was said to have been born out of a sacrifice with the object of winning back the lost empire of Drupada, her father, king of Panchala. Krishna thought of making alliance with his relatives the Pandavas, who were sought to be destroyed by Duryodhana. They were all physically and intellectually strong, full of energy, ability and vigour and with a right title to the kingdom. Draupadi was the gift-horse with which the Pandavas' alliance with Drupada and Krishna was secured, and that was the real beginning of the great fight. The Pandavas revenged the lac house incidents at the Svayambara festival of Draupadi by meteing out blows and thrusts on Duryodhana and his friends, who made the lac house to destroy them, and secured the share of their paternal estate by the alliance of marriage with Draupadi.

Draupadi stood against the oriental idea that confinement in the ha rem and utter slavery are the moral duty of a virtuous princess. She converted the hell of the Dice Hall into an institution of justice, where the impugned holiness of her marriage was attacked with ridicule and the divine demonstration of evil omens at the persecution of the good lady and the virtuous Pandavas roused emotions in the blind man, Dhritarastra. Side by side with the great wrong of insulting the declared empress at the Rajsuya sacrifice, as a member of the royal household, in a manner against all rules and canons of the Ancient Royal court of the Kurus, Draupadi censored the whole assembly and brought to light that a princess of royal blood had to declare false the report of a marriage with the five Pandavas in as much as she was called upon to appear upon the political scene on a charge of snatching the

Empire with her marriage whereas it was won by the energy of the Pandavas.

These are great events, not without great significance to the ancient history of India. The possession of Draupadi by the Pandavas is the root of all trouble and the great war. The disappointment of the kings of India at the Svayambara ceremony of Draupadi and the crowning glory of the Pandavas in the death of Jarasandha, the great enemy of Sri Krishna, who thus secured the first place of worship in the great Rajasuya sacrifice, was the origin of the great war.

The mythological aspect of the character of Draupadi is fully represented in her marriage, which was quite contrary to the customs and laws of the country at that time. The Pandavas were either made demi-gods or the self-differentiating unity\* of Indra, king of Heaven, in mythology. Draupadi's prayer five times for a husband gave her one husband in five persons. This is the poetic licence spoken of in the Rig Veda (10/114/5).

"Polyandric customs became abhorrent to the Brahmanas. The Brahmanas justify Draupadi's position, however, on the ground that as the five Pandava brethren were divinely begotten emanations from one deity, they formed in reality only one person, and could be lawfully married to the same woman. No such afterthought was required to uphold the honour of Draupadi in the age when the legend took its rise. Throughout the whole Mahabharata she figures as the type of a highborn princess, and a chaste, brave, and faithful wife." †

Draupadi married the incarnation of Justice (Dharma), Yudhisthira, and the other brothers were his ancillary adjuncts of Justice, as it were. The five airs, the vital spirits of life, and their internal relation with the soul are explained in the Yoga system of philosophy, with which some interpret the Pandavas' marriage with Draupadi, and Krishna represents the soul, the great friend and relation. Draupadi is the material body on which the five spiritual airs seem to play important parts. This may be interesting, but is not a fact. The relation of the five airs and the relation of the body and the soul are given by the said Dharmavyadha or Fowler of religion as follows —

"The Fowler said —The vital spirit manifesting itself inside the consciousness causes the action of the corporeal frame. The soul being present in both of these acts. The past, the present and the future are inseparably associated with the soul. It is the highest of the possessions of all creatures. It is the essence of Supreme Spirit and we adore it. It is the animating principle of all creatures, it is the eternal Purusha. It is great,—it is the intelligence and it is the Ego, it is the seat of all elements. Thus while seated here (in the corporeal form) it is sustained in all its external or internal relations by the subtle eternal air called Prana and afterwards each creature goes its own way by the action of another subtle air called Samana. This (Samana)

\*Sauparna

†Sir W. W. Hunter's "Indian Empire," page 161



transforming itself to *Apana* air, and, supported by the head of the stomach, carries the refuse matter of the body, such as urine, etc., to the kidneys and intestines. It is present in the three elements of action, exertion and power, and then in that state it is called *Udana* by men learned in the physical science. When it manifests itself by its presence at all the junctional points of the system, it is known by the name of *Vyana*. The internal heat is diffused over all the tissues of our system and supported by these kinds of air, it transforms our food and the tissues and the humours of our system. By the coalition of *Praana* and other airs, a reaction ensues and the heat generated thereby is known as the internal heat of the human system which causes digestion of food. The *Praana* and the *Apana* airs are interposed within the *Samana* and the *Udana* airs. The heat generated by their coalition causes the growth of the body. That portion of its seat extending to as far as the rectum, is called *Apana* and from that, arteries arise in the five airs *Praana*. *Praana* acted on by the heat, strikes against the extremity of the *Apana* region, and then recoiling, it reacts on the heat. Above the navel is the region of undigested food and below it, the region of digestion. *Praana* and all other airs of the system are seated in the navel. The arteries issuing from the heart run upwards and downwards and also in oblique directions, they carry the best essence of our food and are acted upon by the ten *Praana* airs. This is the way, by which go to the highest state, the Yogis who have over come all difficulties, who are patient and self controlled and who have their souls seated in their brains. The *Praana* and *Apana* are thus present in all creatures. Know that the soul is embodied in the corporeal disguise, in the eleven allotropic conditions (of the animal system) and that though eternal, its normal state is apparently modified by its accompaniments even like the fire purified in its pan, - eternal yet with its course altered by its surroundings, and that the divine thing which is kindred with the body is related to the latter in the same way as a drop of water to the sleek surface of a lotus leaf on which it rolls, know that *Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama* are the attributes of all life. Life is the attribute of spirit and spirit again is the attribute of the Supreme Soul. Inert and insensible matter is the seat of the living principle which is active in itself and induces activity in others. That by which the seven worlds are incited to action is called the most high by men of high spiritual insight. Thus in all these elements the eternal spirit does not show itself, but is perceived by the learned in spiritual science by reason of their high and keen perception. A pure minded man, by purifying his heart, is able to destroy the good and evil effects of his actions and obtains eternal bliss by the enlightenment of his inner spirit. This state of peace and purification of heart is likened to the state of a person who, in a cheerful state of mind, sleeps soundly or to the brilliance of a lamp trimmed by a skilful hand. Such a pure-minded man living on frugal diet perceives the supreme spirit reflected in his own mind, and by practising concentration of mind in the evening and early in the morning, sees the Supreme Spirit which has no attributes, in the light of his heart, shining like a dazzling lamp and thus he obtains salvation. *Warice* and *angor* must be subdued by all means, for this constitutes the most sacred virtue that people can practise. It is considered to be the means by which men cross over to the other side of this sea of misery and pain. A man must preserve his virtue, being overcome by anger, his righteousness by pride, his learning by vanity and his soul by illusion. Leniency is the best of virtues, and forbearance is the best of powers, the knowledge of the spirit is the best of all knowledge and truthfulness is the best of religious vows. To tell the truth is good and the knowledge of truth also is good, but what conduces to the greatest good of all creatures is known as the highest truth. He whose actions are performed not with the object of securing any reward or blessings, who has sacrificed all to the requirements

of his renunciation is a real Janyast and is really wise. Communion with Brahma cannot be taught to us even by our spiritual preceptor, he can only give us a clue to the mystery. renunciation of things of the material world is called Yoga. We must not do harm to any creature and must live in amity with all. In this our present existence we must not avenge ourselves on any creature. Self-abnegation, peace of mind, renunciation of hope, and equanimity, these are the ways by which spiritual enlightenment can always be secured. The knowledge of self is the best of all knowledge. In this world as well as in the next, renouncing all worldly desires and assuming a stolid indifference, in which all suffering is at rest, people should fulfil their religious duties with the aid of their intelligence. The fish who desires to obtain salvation, which is very difficult to obtain, must always perform austerities, must be forbearing, self-controlled and must give up that longing fondness which binds him to the things of the earth. The attributes that are perceptible in us become non-attributes in him. He is not bound by anything. He is perceptible only by the expansion and development of our spiritual vision. As soon as the illusion of ignorance is dispelled, this supreme and unalloyed bliss is obtained. By foregoing the objects of both pleasure and pain and by renouncing the feeling which binds him to the things of the earth, one attains to Brahma."

Vyasa's conception of the eternal man (Dharma) is Yudhisthira and Draupadi is the incarnation of Maya. The Hindu creation is the work of Maya, or Love. The origin of love has led the philosophers of Ancient India to connect it with the creation, and Adya Sakti Uma, the consort of Siva, or Lakshmi of Narayana, either of them is represented. Love at first is like a mirage, the relation of a previous existence. Deep affection is of slow growth and it is won by deep devotion. Love must arise from the heart and not by constraint. The poets sang of it, and it is as mysterious as ever, it has no connection with flesh and blood. Love is the product of the highest culture in man and woman—it is not usually the fruit of a marriage. Love gives an instinctive insight into the human heart and defies distance and the elements. When the five elements of a man are exercised by a woman of love, then the real marriage takes place. This is the essence of Samkhya philosophic creation, which is interpreted by the poet in the marriage of Draupadi.

The marriage of Draupadi has direct and indirect relations in the Epic which have not as yet been seen. The original marriage ceremony took place with Yudhisthira, as the text testifies, but in philosophy it demonstrates the creation of the moral and spiritual world, that love, real love, cannot be personal but universal, and when it is so it unites men instead of separating them. The carnal love separates the brothers Sunda and Upasunda in the story of Tilottama and Bali and Sugriva. It is said in the Polish proverb that a woman draws more with a hair of her head than a yoke of oxen well-harnessed, but the ancient Hindus declare that the joy of home depends on a good wife and where the hearts of each are joined by the angel of happiness. Such a wife was

Draupadī so far as the home comforts and unity of the Pandavas were concerned, and there she acted in such a way that she did not make any difference between her husband Yudhishthira and his brothers—that was the illusion or Maya. The European poets sang and in their words the part Draupadī played may be said —

"It is the secret sympathy,  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind  
In body and in soul can bind "

(SCOTT)

"But to see her were to love her,  
Love but her, and love for ever "

(BURNS)

"O that the desert were my dwelling place,  
With one spirit for my minister,  
That I might all forget the human race,  
And, hating no one, Love but only her "

(BYRON)

"Her feet are tender, for she sets her steps  
Not on the ground, but on the heads of men "

(HOMER)

The great Pandavas represented the five important members of the body politic and Sri Krishna the spirit within, and Draupadī was the emblem of prosperity and love. The maintenance of the body does not depend entirely on material food and drink so much as on the spiritual. The spirit of intelligence of Sri Krishna and the love of Draupadī controlled the five senses of the body politic of Government to establish the true religion in India, which was struggling for existence in the great war amongst the followers of the great exponents of the six philosophies of India. The atheistical doctrine of Charvaka, the Epicurus of India, was the culmination of the breaking asunder of society and the religion of divine love.

The empiric sciences are the creations of time and the fetters forged upon men and women by customs and laws serve more to bind the mind than the soul securely to the influences of constellations, and propitiations form the principal duty of the modern age of the Hindus. They cannot realise the essence of love of Radha and Draupadī, which has direct reference to soul and something very divine. Draupadī was not so advanced as Sri Radha. Her soul was united with the five Pandavas and that was the marriage union of the souls, of Kuntī with the four elements of the creation, Sun (fire), winds, Sky (Indra) and Earth (Dharma).

Death levels all things, but virtue it cannot touch. The excessive fury fails in its object. The joy of the wicked does not last long. Such was the case with the Kurus and their allies. The eyes and

footsteps of the master are the most salutary to the living, and that actually was the task imposed upon the great ideal god Sri Krishna, who was present in the great Epic as the master of the just side, the Pandavas, and the much persecuted Lakshmi Draupadi, who belonged to nobody alone but to the just and wise, and thus she was the consort of Yudhisthira. As leaves in a tree live only to enjoy love and join in mutual love with one another, so Draupadi is represented as the sustaining power of the Pandavas to comfort them in their miseries and not to make them blind with envy or passion. The most important function she was made to perform was as the housewife of the distressed Pandava brothers. Practice and experience are of the greatest moment in the arts of love and chastity. The great Epic demonstrates it beautifully in the lesson Draupadi gives to the wife of Krishna in Vana Parva, not yet appreciated by any of the European scholars or students of the great Epic, for the most important duty of a housewife is to know what is to be done according to the changing circumstances in the life of man\*.

Draupadi is a novel creation. She shook off the unnatural domination of husband over wife on the question of social or religious ties or on the sham pretext of sex. She proved to the world that both sexes like to enjoy and not be enjoyed, and in that sense she was called the wife of the Pandavas, to which she did not object on the political ground of benefitting them in the recovery of their lost kingdom and glory. There she was the deity of prosperity to the Pandavas, to whom they were wedded. Her function was to serve the Pandavas in soul not in body through the senses. If her senses ever enjoyed anybody it was the emblem of virtue, Yudhisthira. Sri Radha was a subsequent development of Draupadi.

In the days of Buddhist ascendancy and Tibetan invasion in India, the universal popularity of the Indo-Aryan Epic tempted them to introduce their own customs and practices into the Epic. The Tibetan influence and taste can easily be traced in the popular Ramlika play and entertainment in the North-Western Provinces and Behar. The dramatic interpolation in the introduction of a character of the beautiful heroine of the Mahabharata being the actual physical and *de facto* common wife of the five Pandava brothers must have been the work of a learned Tibetan Sanskrit scholar. They tried to introduce their customs and manners by weaving them indistinguishably into its fabric and texture, to have the hall mark of the Epic and its recital and performance in public entertainments in Bengal. The symbol worship in Tantra adopted by the Buddhas had been incorporated into the

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\*(See) Mahabharata, Chapter CCXXXII

Hindu system of worship, not with hands and feet but with distinctive marks in the fashion of masonic symbols. Haen Tsang, the Buddhist Chinese traveller, found Benares and Gaya, once held in so great esteem with the legends of Buddha's life, had already then become the centres of the Hindu faith. The Buddhistic Trimurti was converted into Jaggannath, Subhadra and Balarama, the three interesting characters of the Epic united in one.

There was a very great Tibetan influence in India and the great Epic was transformed during Tibetan rule. Lt-Col Waddell contributed a valuable article on the Tibetan Invasion of India in 647 A.D. and the historian Vincent Smith said that Arjuna, the minister of Emperor Harsivardhana and the usurper of his throne, could not reign but was taken as a prisoner to China after his defeat.\* The Tibetan historian Taranath gives an account of the Pala Dynasty in Bengal. Gopal, the founder of that dynasty, suffered defeat at the hands of Vatsaraja of Gurjara, king of Bhinmal. In 760 A.D. a number of kings under the names of Krishna and Govinda reigned. Krishna was famous for the Rock Kailash Temple at Ellore in the Nizam's Dominions. His sons Govinda and Dhruva Nirupama succeeded their father. The latter prided himself on his defeat of Vatsaraja, the above referred to Gurjara king, whom he despoiled of two white umbrellas taken from the king of Bengal, then called Gauda. And last though not least, the ground for ascribing Tibetan influence in the great Epic is that Tibetan maxims are found to be identical with those of the Epics.

"The Ten Faults—Want of faith in religious books, disrespect for teachers, unpleasant conduct, covetousness, talking too much, laughing at another's misfortune, using abusive language, getting angry with old people, robbing and pilfering. The Eight Acts of Lowborn men—Improvidence, using coarse language, disrespect, boasting, making big oves or staring, loose conduct, coarse manners and stealing. The Nine Follies—Praising oneself, coveting another's wife, having no wife, conferring power on one's wife, cursing a well wisher, borrowing things which one cannot return, not cherishing one's brothers, ignorance of right and wrong, coveting the things of others. Talk regarding Religion and the cause and effect of deeds should only be spoken into the ears of clever monks, tales of worldly misery and joys should only be spoken into the ears of relatives and friends. The Roots of Quarrels are three, namely 'Yes' (assertion) 'What' (doubting sarcasm) and 'You!' (abuse). The kite quarrels and fights with other birds, the horse with the yak, the weasel with the snake, the crow with the owl, as these are enemies through their actions in former existences."†

The Mousal Parva of the Mahabharata gives a picture of the history of the Yadava family, Sri Krishna's exploits were recast and revised at the time of his descendants or devotees, who adopted such

\* Page 387

† Professor Waddell's "Lhasa and Its Mysteries," page 210

names as auspicious. History proves the time of revision and additions to the original Epic. It seems possible that the dramatic revision took place in Bengal during the Tibetan supremacy in India for the obvious reason that the drama *Bani Samhara* by Bhattanarayan, who was brought from Kanouj and settled in Gour, was written in Bengal. It is Tibetan influence which made Draupadi the wife of the five Pandavas, Kunti and Madhribi of four gods and kings, respectively. It is Tibetan influence which introduced the Rakshasas in the two Epics instead of Asuras. The beauties of the Hill tribes Apsaras and Gandharvas of Gandhar (Candahar) and Kashmiras were not left out of consideration to make the dramas attractive and appealing to the audience.

Dr Holtzman first propounded the great and novel theory that the traditional stock of legends was first worked up into its present shape by some Buddhist poets who showed a great predilection for the Kuru party. Hindus were not worshippers of prophets, they worshipped incarnations and gods. The Pandavas and Draupadi were not such incarnations or gods or goddesses. The marriage of Draupadi sows the seed of existence which Buddhism fixes in the doctrine of Karma, the sun of merit and demerit. Gautama Buddha considered a lonely life in the forest to be the most conducive to self-conquest. In his view men differed one from another not by accident of birth, but by their attainments of character. The five Pandavas did not differ very much from one another beyond the five principal kinds of meditation taking the place of a prayer in Buddhism with which the boon of Draupadi is connected.

"The first is called *Maitri bhavana*, or meditation on Love, in which the monk thinks of all beings and longs for happiness for each. First thinking how happy he himself would be if free from all sorrow, anger and evil desire he is then to wish for the same happiness for others and lastly to long for the welfare of his foes remembering their good actions only, and that in some former birth his enemy may have been his father or his friend, he must endeavour in all earnestness and truth to desire for him all the good he would seek for himself. The second is *Karuna-bhavana*, or meditation on Pity in which he thinks of all beings in distress realises as far as he can their unhappy state and thus awakens the sentiment of pity. The third meditation is *Mudita bhavana* or meditation on Gladness the converse of the last. The fourth is *Asubha bhavana*, or Purity, in which the monk thinks of the vileness of the body, and of the horrors of disease and corruption, how everything corporeal passes away like the foam of the sea, and how by the continued repetition of birth and death mortals become subject to continual sorrow. We hear of the mirage in the desert cheating the unwary traveller's eyes with the promise of water to quench his burning thirst but this mirage of human life, raising hopes of joy that turn bitter in the drinking is a more real mockery. The fifth is *Upeksha Chavana*, or the meditation on serenity wherein the monk thinks of all things that men hold good or bad,—power and oppression, love and hate, riches and want, fame and contempt, youth and beauty decrepitude and disease, and regards them all with fixed indifference, with utter calmness and serenity of mind."

This dramatic Mahabharata is the creation of the Buddhistic age. Whatever Yudhishthira won he gave away in the Asvamedha sacrifice. This is what Buddha did. Self-control and charity are the keywords of Buddhism, which establish the worship of five Dhyani-buddhas. Adhi-buddha, the origin of all things, using the wisdom within him, produced by meditation the five Dhyani-buddhas. The official incarnations of Amitabha and Avalokiteswara are the two leading priests of Tibet. In Tibet the development in doctrine was followed by a development in ecclesiastical Government. Among the customs of the Tibetans the system of polyandry has been in use from a very ancient time, *i.e.*, the brothers in a family having one wife in common. The author of the dramatic Mahabharata must have been a Tibetan Buddhist or a Dravidian. It has been shown that polyandry is even now in vogue in Tibet and Coorg as well.

"The Coorgs, of whom the Kodagas are the chief tribe, constitute thirteen castes. They are of Dravidian origin, and retain the devil worship of their ancestors, they speak a dialect of Canarese. They are a well formed, bold and active, but ignorant and superstitious race. The strange institution of polyandry prevalent among them, according to which the wives of the brothers of a family are common property, appears to have arisen from the necessity of counteracting the exterminating influence of wars by making the brothers of the slain the rightful husbands of their widows."\*

Drupada was unwilling to circulate the report of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas but was prevailed upon by Vyasa when he was blessed with foresight, which Vyasa gave him in confidence. This speaks for itself. The marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was a political declaration or a religious one on the five kinds of meditation of the Buddhas. No more hard and fast theory can be given than this as many criticisms have been made and are likely to be made. But it is certain that Draupadi never was the wife of the five Pandavas.

The dramatic Mahabharata first conceived the idea of introducing the circular of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas as a means to an end, the recovery of the possessions of the Pandavas without a blow, and the dice play was the reply to that dramatic Mahabharata by the persecution of Draupadi and Yudhishthira, who should not have agreed to give out such a false report and as a punishment for which he and his brothers with Draupadi were exiled for thirteen years. There were men who studied morality to make a show of their learning and in order not to live according to the accepted rules. When such men became the editors of the great Epic these things were introduced

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\*Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume VI, page 341

as something novel and mysterious to be in keeping with the greatness of the illustrious example prodigies Draupadi did not escape in their hands as wife of the five Pandavas

"The Gospel contains," says Mr Locke, "so perfect a body of ethics that reason may be excused from any further inquiry, since she may find man's duty clearer and easier in revelation than in herself"

The memory and authority of the parents were the religion of the ancient people Their will was law and their word of authority settled the difficult questions ununderstandable It was for this reason the alleged political marriage declaration of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was at first acceptable to the world The dice play at the Kuru Court exposed the hollowness of such a declaration before the kings of India present

Learned Western Sanskrit scholars, taking these interpolations to be genuine parts of the Mahabharata, have been puzzled by this Epic tradition of Draupadi's having had simultaneously five husbands, which is shockingly opposed to all Vedic customs and Hindu laws of marriage Taking this dramatic creation of her being the common wife of the five Pandava brothers to be a real fact, they have inferred that the Pandavas must then have flourished in an age when the institutes of Manu, etc., had not yet developed and crystallized

From the Mahabharata it is evident that the heroes of the Epic as well as the other personages flourished in an age of strict Brahmanical laws and discipline, but from the single seeming fact of Draupadi's anti-Brahmanical marriage, they have proceeded to disprove the accepted age of the heroes of the Mahabharata The *ratio decidendi* should rather have followed the converse course, namely, that when the heroes and personages of the Epic are seen to be so strongly under the sway of the strict Brahmanical rules and laws, this shockingly anti-Brahmanical episode of Draupadi's marriage with five brothers must itself stand disproved and go out, and the internal evidence of the Mahabharata itself is strong enough to substantiate this She was the lawfully wedded wife of Yudhishthira alone and the other four Pandavas had their own wives Draupadi was the empress of Yudhishthira, the emperor, and she was the emblem of the Pandavas' prosperity The customs and usages found injurious to the people were stopped and punishments were mentioned for transgressors There is no law of punishment in the Hindu institutes for marrying five husbands if ever that had been the custom amongst the Hindus No idols or pictures or carvings have been found in India where the five Pandavas were married to one Draupadi





and died or when his brothers shared the same fate one after the other Love is not the fruit of passion The great Epic demonstrates it in Draupadi The love of the youths Drupada and Drona ended in envy and dismemberment of Drupad's kingdom To set it right Drupada performed the sacrifice for the birth of such children as would be able to recover the lost kingdom This is the genesis of the great Epic in which the Pandavas figured Draupadi, Dhirstadyumna, etc , were born Drupada was perhaps told by the sages that he should take the assistance of Sri Krishna, the master of Divine Love, in the marriage of Draupadi True love represented in Draupadi is a friend of divine love as from true love divine love comes Divine love stepped in and said in the action —

“Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments ”

The marriage passed off and after it the goddess of prosperity Lakshmi blessed the Pandavas with suzerainty over India The goddess of prosperity is reflected in Draupadi, even their worst enemy Duryodhana admitted it and wanted to deprive them of her.

“You should remember Arjuna had his famous bow and Bhima his mace, but it was the praiseworthy Draupadi who liberated the Pandavas, who were all made slaves at the game of dice ”\*

Draupadi was a fearless, cultured Indian princess who showed that she could stand on her own legs, could render great assistance to Yudhishthira and his brothers She did not accuse Yudhishthira before his enemies or at home , her stand before the memorable dice hall could not but elicit praise from all She not only demonstrated what true love is but justified the action of her husband Yudhishthira and stood by him in his worst miseries

“Nor for reward, or any fee,  
But like as thou has loved me,  
I love, and ever will love thee,  
Only as king of this my heart,  
Only because my God thou art ”

(S WILBERFORCE.)

The friends of Duryodhana headed by Karna tried her fully by damning the Pandava king, but she proved by her conduct that love when repressed engenders power.

“The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns  
The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage,  
But when his fair course is not hinder'd stoness,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage ”

(SHAKESPEARE )

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\* The Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 110-111

So Shakespeare corroborated her conduct. Violent passions cannot disturb the mind where true love dwells. Love guards against vice. Every transgression can be traced to the working of the evil passions in the human heart. It takes possession when the heart is vacant or vacillating. The mind like the body needs to be trained and equipped before it can use its powers in the most advantageous way. A man or woman when in love learns the art of thinking well and consequently the natural powers come into play. This is the root of self-sacrifice in true love; if a lover sacrifices his own pleasure for that of his beloved he is a devotee at the temple of love, never self-possessed. Individuality is no longer his own foolish master, love craves a new and higher object, it inhales the celestial air of doing good to others and makes man or woman forget self-interest. Man becomes the sport of circumstances when he loses command over himself. The art of governing passions is the keynote of success in this vale of tears. Wealth, skill and knowledge can give little satisfaction to man or woman if one does not cultivate control of one's senses. Love and true love can alone control the senses. Discretion gives a value to all human qualifications and it is said to be the better part of valour. Yudhishthira was endowed with it and was truly the husband of Draupadī, the goddess of prosperity and love.

The marriage of Draupadī, according to the Chinese travellers' records, cannot be with the five Pandavas. What Draupadī's marriage with the Pandavas means may be explained in the words of the angel of heaven to Mudgal in Vana Parva, Chapter CCLIX —

"He spoke thus to the Brahmana 'Ascend this car. O Rishi, the result of your acts, you have obtained the fruit of your asceticism.' When the celestial messenger was thus talking, the Rishi told him, O celestial messenger, I desire that you should describe to me the attributes of those that live there. What is their asceticism and what is their purpose? What is the happiness in heaven and what are its defects? O lord, it has been declared by nobly born virtuous men that friendship with five men is formed by only walking with them seven paces. In the name of friendship, I ask you, tell me the truth and that which is good for me to know. Hearing you, I shall according to your words fix the course I ought to follow.'"

After the success of the declaration of the marriage of Draupadī to the five Pandavas had served its end it was exposed that it was not true both in the boon of Dhritarastra to Draupadī and the staking of Draupadī at a game of dice by Yudhishthira. The five Pandavas were united as one by the virtue of Draupadī and they were not separated, as is often the case with brothers who live separate for their wives. Draupadī came out from the fire of sacrifice, as she was reported to have issued, and justified her birth by the divine light of love which she

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\* The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CCLIX, verses 32—36, page 374

showered round the great king of virtue Yudhishthira to dispel the darkness of the five Pandavas passion. The duty of the eldest brother's wife enjoined on Draupadi to treat them with love and affection, which would make them feel quite happy with higher ideas of life. Kunti had misgivings lest Arjuna be led astray by the wives he had and for that she sent a message through Sri Krishna to Arjuna to act up to the words of Draupadi.

The insult to Draupadi by the conduct of the Kuru princes at the court produced evil omens which brought the blind king Dhritarastra to his senses and he granted her a boon as follows —

“Dhritarastra said —O Panchali, ask from me any boon you desire. Chaste and devoted to virtue, you are the foremost of all my daughters-in-law. Draupadi said —O best of the Bharata race, if you grant me a boon, I say let the handsome Yudhishthira, ever obedient to all duties, be freed from slavery. Let not unthinking children speak of my greatly intelligent son Prativindya as the son of a slave. Having been born a prince, to whom there is no man superior, and nurtured by kings, it is not proper that he should be called the son of a slave. Dhritarastra said —O blessed girl, what you have said, let it be so. O excellent one, ask for a second boon. I shall grant it to you. My heart desires to give you a second boon. You do not deserve to get only one boon. Draupadi said —O king grant me this boon that Bhimasena, Arjuna and the twins with their bows and cars be freed from slavery and gain their liberty. Dhritarastra said —O greatly blessed girl, let it be what you say. O daughter, ask for a third boon, you have not been sufficiently honoured with two boons. Ever treading the path of virtue, you are the foremost of all my daughters-in-law. Draupadi said —O illustrious one, covetousness destroys virtue. O foremost of kings, I do not deserve a third boon, I dare not ask any. O king of kings, it is ordained that a Vaishya may ask one boon, a Kshatriya woman two, a Kshatriya three and a Brahmana one hundred. O king, these my husbands, freed from the wretched state of slavery, will be able to achieve prosperity by their own virtuous acts.”\*

The boon asked for by Draupadi makes it quite clear that her husband was Yudhishthira alone and her son was Prativindya and no one else. If she were the wife of the five Pandavas she would not have asked for the liberation of Yudhishthira and his son alone in the first boon. Draupadi was chaste not only in body and mind, but soul as well. The chastity of custom was repugnant to her ideals. This is what is meant in the alleged report of the five husbands. The five senses of God Indra in different bodies of the Pandavas was the explanation given by the authors of the Dramatic Mahabharata. Love is aroused by the animal passion of the five senses and marriage is the union of human life when these five senses are delighted and rise to the higher sphere of the spiritual world. Draupadi was declared the Empress of India in the Rajsuya of Yudhishthira and at the dice play of the Kuru Court.

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\* The Mahabharata, Chapter LXXI, Sabha Parva, verses 27—36, pages 95-96

Draupadī in the dice-play hall, where she had been most outrageously dragged in by the hair by the villainous Dushasana as a slave won at the dice-stake of Yudhishthira, could have easily avoided the result of the stake and saved herself from slavery and the horrible indignities by proclaiming before the royal assemblage the fact, if really it was a fact, that she was not the wife of Yudhishthira alone, but of the five Pandavas, and that therefore Yudhishthira alone had no legal right to stake her at the dice-play. This plea was actually suggested to her by Durjodhana and his friends there. They wanted her to make the declaration, knowing full well that it would be a false declaration and as such would not be made by Draupadī. But Yudhishthira and Arjuna, in the midst of Bhuma's violent ebullitions of temper and imprecations and vows, exhorted Draupadī and the Pandavas not to swerve an inch from the path of strict obedience to virtue, rectitude and veracity. After this, what Draupadī pronounced possesses the stamp of strict truth, being a confession palpably against her interests in the critical situation in which she had been then placed. By this declaration she virtually gave up all her pleas and surrendered herself to the possible prospect of becoming a slave of the villainous Durjodhana etc. by pronouncing in unequivocal language before the royal assembly that she was the lawfully wedded wife of Yudhishthira alone (as the use of the singular number in राक्ष्यं राक्षी clearly indicates, *vide* Doota Parva, (घृतपन्थे) Chapter 69, verse 11, Original Sanskrit Mahabharata )

The real truth about the marriage of Draupadī with Yudhishthira alone is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt in the famous dice-play incidents. Draupadī first of all showed great solicitude for Yudhishthira alone as a faithful, cultured princess is morally and in duty bound to do for her lawful husband, and prayed that the wicked Durjodhana and his friends might not indulge in calling her husband Yudhishthira a slave or their son Prativindya to be degraded to a slave's son. If she had been the common wife of all the Pandavas, she would certainly have not particularised and specialised Yudhishthira and his son in the manner she did in her great distress. Besides, it proves that Draupadī did not bear any sons other than this Prativindya.

The best dowry a wise man like Yudhishthira received with his wife Draupadī was the good principle that the brothers could not be divided. For whoever leads home a woman who is not a slave of luxury, possesses a high principled helpmate and not a mistress, a firm aid for his whole life. Draupadī was such a woman. Though born in the lap of luxury she followed the Pandavas to the woods and made them happy. Princess she was, but not drunk with the wine of passions and

luxury. From the attempt to divest her of her clothes at the public dice hall and her challenge it may be said that Draupadi was resigned to wrapping herself in the mantle of her own integrity and sought only honest poverty. It was a question of absolute resignation to God. She learnt this from the discipline of mind and soul in company with her great husband Yudhishthira. Draupadi through her love and devotion to God above saved the husband from abject slavery.

The words of Draupadi in reply to the admonition of Yudhishthira invests Draupadi justly with the title of prosperity incarnate.

"Success or failure, no one should despair for success in action depends upon the union of many circumstances. One element wanting proportionate success does not come or nothing at all, if however no exertion is made no success is acquired, nor any quality is seen. The man by his intelligence and according to his might and power brings place, time means and auspicious rites for the acquisition of prosperity. One should assiduously engage in action, his guide being his prowess amongst the qualities necessary for a lion energy is the foremost. If an intelligent man finds his enemy superior to him in many qualities, he should accomplish his object by the arts of conciliation and proper appliances. O Yudhishthira, he should wish for the calamity and banishment of his foe—what of mortal men, even he be an ocean or a mountain. A person, by actively prying into the holes of his enemy, satisfies a debt to himself as well as to his enemies. A man should never think ill of himself, whoever thinks ill of himself never earns splendid prosperity. O descendant of Bharata, the success of persons is thus situated, it is said that the course of success depends upon time and situation. In the days of yore my father housed a learned Brahmana, he said all this to my father, O foremost of Bharatas. My brothers, formerly accepted from Brihaspati moral precepts and then in our house I heard all this from them."

The love of the sweethearts Sita Radha and Sri Krishna became an open secret in the religion of the Hindus and the dramatist came forward to utilise Draupadi of the great Epic as the connecting link of Sri Krishna's greatness as a God of love, for when Draupadi's honour was at stake the Pandavas, sitting with their weapons, could not help her, but Sri Krishna did by the supernatural power of love. This was a drama of love. There was no separation in the case of Draupadi in the Mahabharata, but no separation is so cruel as that in the presence of the Pandavas, Draupadi was separated in heart and soul to Sri Krishna for the protection of her person. What a pious king like Yudhishthira, with his powerful brothers, could not do, Sri Krishna, the emblem of divine love did. The greatest protection of the human being is the soul force within, which concentrates with that of the Universe. This is the great lesson preached in the taking off of the clothes of Draupadi in the dramatic Mahabharata even though it did not actually take place. The great separation of Draupadi took place in the face of

her husband at the Dice Hall. She was insulted in the presence of her husband and his brothers. They could not do anything to relieve her or chastise the oppressor,—this is the divine love of God. Divine love is not the active materialistic love.

Kunti was an ideal mother and Draupadi was an ideal wife—the two great women made the Pandavas great. Domestic happiness depends on the moral discipline of the family members, social happiness on the religious background of the country and spiritual felicity on the training of the mind and soul and their union. The essence of virtue and vice is not the continuation of the bodies of persons or society by the infliction of anything wrong in the eyes of society. Such ideas differ with the habits and customs of a country, and the standard is bound to be affected by them. The ancient Hindus did not build their religion on that basis. Their ideals were of a higher standard than the ordinary ones. Doctors attend injuries to the body, kings inflict punishments on wrong-doers, priests minister to the mind diseased, and friends and relations revive and restore the position of their dependants and penitance and penances remove the sins of the mind. It is divine love which alone can give the eternal bliss of heaven.

Chastity in body is not chastity in mind or soul. Renuka, the mother of Parasurama, was not guilty of unchastity of body but of mind and she met her doom at the hand of her own son by the command of her husband. Sita was exiled though she was chaste in body and mind, for she was not so in soul as she wept over her lot and could not enjoy peace of mind. She passed to earth as her daughter. She belonged to the maternal world. From earth she came, to earth she went; but Draupadi came out of fire and consumed the passions of not only the Pandavas but exposed those of the world princes who assembled at her Svayambhara ceremony of marriage by their inglorious fight and defeat. The villany of the Kuru Court and of the world who followed them in their mad pursuit to deprive the Pandavas of their just possessions was set at rest by the marriage of Draupadi. She proved to the world that it was the chivalry of the Pandavas which secured them the sovereignty of the world.

She did not swoon and die at the calumny of her husband or join with his enemies for the indignities she had been subjected to by her husband's indiscretion, but she justified her husband's action even in her worst trial—there is the greatness of Draupadi in the current Mahabharata over the Ramayana, which is hardly realised by all. The political report of five husbands could not touch her reputation or her soul like Sita's residence at the Court of Ravana so many years alone in spite of the

fire ordeal The chastity of Sita lies in mind and person but not in spirit, for the boons she asked in the Ramayana read as follows —

'Then raising suppliant hands the dame  
Prayed humbly to the Lord of Flame  
'As this fond heart by virtue swayed  
From Raghu's son has never strayed,  
So, universal witness, fire  
Protect my body on the pyre,  
As Raghu's son has idly laid  
This charge on Sita hear and aid "' \*

This is not the only instance There is another to relieve Hanuman the great messenger of Rama who was persecuted by Ravana with the burning of his tail —

"Swift to the kindled fire she went  
And prayed before it reverent,  
If I my husband have obeyed,  
And kept the ascetic vows I made,  
Free, ever free, from stain and blot,  
O spare the Vanar harm him not'  
Then leapt on high the flickering flame  
And shone in answer to the dame  
The pitying fire its rage forbore,  
The Vanar felt the heat no more. ' †

She refused to be carried to Rama by Hanuman on the ground of discipline of morality —

"Nor can I touch, of free accord,  
The limbs of any save my lord  
If, by the giant forced away,  
In his enfolding arms I lay,  
Not mine, O Vanar, was the blame  
What could I do, a helpless dame?  
Go, to my lord my message bear,  
And bid him end my long despair " ‡

The Pandavas and Draupadi dropped down dead in their journey of life like ripe fruits off a tree with the progress of time Draupadi went first of all Yudhisthira did not care to look at her or to perform the last rite like a domestic being He was on a pilgrimage to the divine shrine of heaven The pilgrims of the same path do not reach the goal The great Maya Draupadi must go when the pilgrims are earnest like the Pandavas, the heroes of great trials and fruits of self-control The

\* Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki" Canto CXVIII, Book VI, page 496

† Ibid. Canto LIII, Book V, page 423

‡ Ibid. Canto XXXVII, Book V, page 416



greatness of Sita and Draupadī is reflected in their horrible sufferings for they could have burnt to ashes their enemies by the power of chastity if they wished to do so. A well balanced mind by culture is the best remedy against all worldly afflictions—this is the gospel of truth the Indian Epics preach and not the exploits of the heroes of the Royal houses of Oudh, (Ajodhya) or Delhi (Indraprastha)

But there are good grounds for holding that the whole character of Draupadī is an interpolation and a fiction. The principal personages of the Epic (like the forecast of the *dramatis personæ*) are enumerated in the Annukramanika and it is highly improbable that the character of the very heroine would be omitted, if really she was one of the characters of the original Epic. The true incidents of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were thus traduced by dramatists of the Buddhistic teaching of Tibet who introduced their own customs and manners in the heroes and heroines of the Epic and made them their own property. The heroine of the dramatic Mahabharata is Draupadī, but no mention is made in the table of contents of the Mahabharata about it, where only the names of Kuntī and Gandharī are mentioned. This gives a clue to the sad transformation of the original Mahabharata into the dramatic form in which the current Mahabharata is now presented to the world. Like the characters of Bhīṣma, Karna etc., Draupadī too is a creation of the later editors and collators for lending dramatic interest to the great Epic.

It will now be clear why Draupadī's character has been a puzzle, why Yudhishthira's perplexingly stoic calmness amidst oppression and tyranny has been an enigma, and why Śrī Krishna's absolute disinterestedness in lending his whole army to the Kurus and himself alone going over to the Pandavas has been a riddle to the world. The votaries of the Epic Muse have racked their brains to solve the true implications of these mystic characters but have seldom succeeded in satisfactorily solving the riddles.

These are the characters in the Indian Epics which have been the outstanding figures, from their unique singularity and the absence of the commonplace in them. The other characters, like those of Rama and Sita, Bhīma and Arjuna, Bhīṣma and Karna, etc., superb and magnificent as they are, are not clothed with any singular or unique traits but are only magnified as magnificent exponents of ordinary human traits and features. These characters are therefore quite clear and intelligible to everybody and so do not call for special exposition.

The Epic authors represent characters to teach the world virtue and truth effectively by examples. They cite evil deeds against good

ones to bring them out with greater force. Prudence is the best safeguard against misfortune and it is learnt more from bitterest enemies than from bosom friends. Nations learn to protect the people by defensive measures such as raising high walls round their capitals, keeping ready capable armies, navies, arms and ammunition to defend themselves against aggression. God has been manifesting himself through art and the great artists of mankind. The teachings of Vyasa and Valmiki are different from the Western Epic writers. It is true that art is the best medium of man's transformation to godliness. It is to be found in music, poetry, sculpture, painting, etc. But Indian Epic writers presented ideal heroes and heroines who have knowledge of self and soul. They have been the torch-bearers of a Nation. It is their will and power to shower Divine knowledge upon the people of India and bring about their salvation.

Men are not meant to flit away as dreams or fade like leaves or like a beast to feast his belly with the hand and mouth, but the great Creator has given something to man superior to all these—the heart to love Him whom eye hath not seen nor ear hath heard Him speak. If beauty is all in all you must see that God has made beauty vanish with age and time and not everlasting in nature, man, woman and the animal kingdom. Orpheus made known to people noble mysteries to abstain from bloodshed and Homer taught what was useful of military skill and all the various life of armies. Poets are school masters in the arena of life to teach men virtue and truth. Browning in his art poem characterises Art as the go between of man and God. "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp."

The Epics of India are slowly engrossing the attention and sympathy of the cultured men and women of the world and they are anxious to know more and more of India through Indian eyes. There is the irresistible urge of the true Indian culture to embrace the whole world as its kith and kin (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum*) as is expressed in Sanskrita language.

The Bhakti cult of Vajnavism is reflected in primitive Christianity. It is admitted by Professor Garbe and others. Besides, the Hetiodorous inscription of Basnagar (150 B. C.) proves beyond doubt that the Greeks were followers of the Bhakti cult. The worship of the Avalokiteswara of supreme compassion betrays Graeco-Buddhist Art. The Mahabharata throws light on a fight of an international nature in the plains of Kurukshetra, giving victory to the party who followed the great principles of tolerance and well-being of the greater number of innocent and pious men and women. Sri Krishna heralded the keynote of the power

of the cultural federation of greater India to the world and declared himself the king of Dwarka, the land of love, with sixteen thousand bright, loving queens of India.

Yajnavalkya started a revolt against religious materialism and ritualism and asserted the noble principle of moral responsibility patent in the doctrines of Atman or soul-self in the Upanishads. He and his disciple king Janaka paved the path of Jainism and Buddhism in India. The history of Indo-Aryan and Indo-Brahmin collaboration has yet to be written. The great king Darius occupied a portion of the Indus valley which was perhaps the seat of the discovered Mohenjodaro civilisation. It is surmised that the word was thus imparted into the Sanskrit vocabulary. The Mahabharata contains the best tradition of the greater India with glowing tributes to the great ideal heroes and heroines of the physical, social, moral and spiritual worlds. The Ramayana is only a heroic poem throwing light on the different phases of kings and queens of Treta Yuga in Dasaratha and his consorts Koushilya and Kakeyi, Rama and Sita, Ravana and Mandadari, Bali and Tara.

The Mahabharata stands on a higher plane, there the heroes did not ascend the throne by right of inheritance but by virtue of their culture and practices. Sri Krishna won the laurel in killing tyrants like Kamsa and Sisupala, and was instrumental in the death of Jarasandha, whereas Yudhishthira, Arjuna and Bhishma won the Empire, levelling to the ground the invincible heroes and powerful kings in the famous battlefield of Kurukshetra. The Epic writers place side by side the great and virtuous and the powerful tyrants. In the elevated society of rank it is only vanity and interest that stand out. A desire to amend the ways of the world is unalloyed folly. Friends of humanity are not easily found. The noble do not care to be mixed up with the whole world. There are men with fiery zeal whom one sees rushing to high fortune by the road leading to heaven, for they are the men who make a trade and traffic of politics and plety and are ready to purchase influence and dignity by the turning up of the whites of their eyes and affected ejaculations with a soul given up to filthy lucre.

What does it mean when a man like Bhishma, Drona or Karna meets Duryodhana and rushes to caress him swearing friendship, faith, zeal in his affairs, esteem and tenderness? Fishes do not shut their eyes, which are lidless. Science has not been able to answer definitely whether they sleep or close their eyes. The Epic writers likewise made these men immune from death as if invulnerable, and then made them stake their lives at their pleasure in a game of truthfulness, curse or sacrifice.

for all that is held sacred and holy in the eyes of the people to attract their admiration in order to inspire them with such examples. The punishments of the mighty heroes are more full of fear than evil and not without reason, like the lightning which causes danger to few but fear to all. He who sticks to silver and honour is never satisfied with them. Death is at last to be wished for by them.

Every man is to measure himself by his proper standard. One has been brought into the world with everything prepared and ready to hand. It is difficult to renounce one's own nature. The man who is too engrossed in fortune's favour will tremble when she leaves him. It was for this that Duryodhana hid himself in the lake Dripayana. This man, fearing poverty, had to depend on others, *viz.*, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Asvathama, etc., whom he carried on his shoulders as masters and lived in eternal bondage being intemperate in his ambition. Riches in the hands of the wise yield obedience, but in those of the fool, command. Duryodhana and his father were blind to all that the Pandavas did for them when they were in danger. Besides, the Kurus were like savage bears to the Pandavas but were at peace among themselves. To distinguish human creation God has given man a reasoning soul, so that mutual kindness might be lit in human hearts to return the good which others render.

The Indian Epic demonstrates to the world that the good hate sin from an innate love of virtue. Virtue is not a mere name nor religion, a rhapsody of words, but is the great qualifications of mind and heart produced by culture. It makes man fly from the world's grandeur, ambition and riches. The poor forlorn man has a greater chance of happiness in the woods than kings, their generals and courtiers in a majestic court. Virtue and religion bring to light what is concealed from ordinary eyes and cover up what is shining with the greatest splendour and exciting the human senses. One cannot but sympathise with the misfortunes of Rama and Sita, Yudhishthira and Draupadi, and feel relieved at their eventual victories with glory. The feeling heart when it embalms with tears cannot help but approach the presence of God. The Indian Epics declare that Yudhishthira showed this by his imitable life and proved it to be eternal, whereas his great adversaries Bhishma and Drona, though immortal, paid the penalty of death. His own brothers Arjuna and Bhima, even his consort Draupadi, could not escape the hand of death. Acceptable men like Yudhishthira and Arjuna are thrust in the furnace of adversity and trials like gold is tried for its pureness in the fire. Great men rejoice in adversity just as a great general triumphs in victory through hard trials and by overcoming dangers.

In every great war of the world there are two accounts—one admiring the fallen victims, the other marching triumphantly with the victorious heroes and singing their praise. The current Mahabharata is a medley of these two versions, any compromise between them was utterly impossible. The description of the war of Kurukshetra is of a much later age and has become unwieldy, containing as it does the accounts of all the fallen victims of the different provinces of India who fought and fell in the great battle on either side. The moral of the great Epic seems to have been that through perseverance, energy, skill, devotion and merit Sri Rama and Sri Krishna could overcome giants like Ravana and his powerful families, Emperors like Jarasandha, Dhritarastra and their friends and allies.

The love and tribute of his subjects are the greatest protection of a king worthy of becoming an Emperor of India. This is demonstrated in the subjects of the Epics in sacrifices of Asvamedha and Rajsuya of Ancient India. It is for this the great Indian Epics were recited with religious fervour in those glorious sacrifices of ancient India. The scenes of the two famous fights of India, which were the subject matters of the two great Indian Epics, were not the same place but quite distant from each other. The Ramayana links Ceylon with India, but the Mahabharata decentralises India in the famous plain which afterwards became the venue decisive battles about the sovereignty of India.

The Epic authors present their heroes and heroines in different spheres of life. They did not mix in society in the sense in which that word is used and understood in the west, but their ideals radiated amongst the Indian Nation from the very early days to go ahead of the other nations of the world. The kings and queens of Ancient India were ideal men and women who suffered for their convictions, for culture and intellect must always be for the great sacrifices in the best interests of the humanity over whom they rule not by the power of their own strength and arms but by their unique examples of sacrifices. The ancient Indian kings and queens sacrificed their own pleasures of the senses in order that they might guide their subjects just as dutiful cultured parents do in bringing up their children to instil in them all their advanced notions of life and living.

The ideal princes and princesses went to the forest, abdicating their thrones and pleasures of life, for the sake of their parents in order that the great ideal might not suffer in the eyes of their subjects.

## REVIEW.

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The Indian Epics from a superficial viewpoint present similar themes, developed with similar romantic adventures and leading to similar sequels. Both start with pictures of court-scenes with old kings and princes, with plurality of queens, both pass on to tragic banishments and exiles of princes to the woods for long terms, both present developments of romantic adventures which lead to bitter strife and sanguinary battles ending in almost the annihilation of the party which was in the wrong and the coronation of the triumphant party with its necessary appendage of a great sacrifice. The Mahabharata however, does not centre round a single hero and a single heroine like the Ramayana, and therein lies the superior grandeur of the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata develops several characters as heroes and heroines, each being a hero or a heroine from a particular point of view. The five Pandavas collectively represented the different princely attributes of humanity, justice, love, prowess, etc., Kunti, Gandhari and Draupadi represented the distinguishing features of womanly virtues of princesses, Sri Krishna, Bhishma and Bidura were ideals of divine love, chivalry and ripe wisdom, respectively.

The great Epic opens with the hard life of discipline of Ancient India and the cultivation of Pauranic literature and the science of medicine in the first three sections—Pousya, Poulama and Astika. They give an idea of Ancient India and its progress in the university of Naimischaranya under Sounaka. The Veda had not been forgotten when the original Bharata Samhita or the Mahabharata was composed. Vyasa had compiled the Rig Veda and Devapi made a Sukta of it. Sri Krishna was a pupil of Ghora Angirasa, who taught him special Upanishadic tenets. The Parikshits were referred to as real personages by Yajnavalkya. They could not therefore be imaginary personages.

The privations, hardships and trials in the old Aryan education are graphically described in the Pousya Parva. In the Poulama Parva the strength of love between husband and wife is patent. The sacrifice of the half of the one's span of life to add to the life of the other visualises the extent of sacrifice which a loving husband can make for his wife, and the abduction of Bhrigu's wife by Poulama shows the attachment of the wife for the husband. The offering of a bribe to Kasyapa by the king of Naga to dissuade him from bringing Parikshita back to life shows the

sage's great knowledge of medicines and sure antidotes for snake poison. The enumeration of the five principal sins includes adultery with the preceptor's wife. Uttanka was tried and was found worthy of his preceptor's daughter, to whom he was married. His gotra was Goutama. Unsuspecting Ahilya, wife of Goutama, fell a victim to Indra's misconduct and Rama, by accepting her hospitality, established her innocence but failed to do so in the case of his own Sita and exiled her. The poem, in developing Rama's attribute of love for his subjects has pushed it to such an extreme degree of theoretical excellence, that in practical life it has come to be regarded as a standing reproach to Rama's conjugal fidelity.

The Solar and Lunar dynasties descended from the two families of sages, Kasyapa and Atri, respectively. Buddha was son of Soma (Moon) and from him the Lunar dynasty is traced. The Sun was Kasyapa's son. Bhubharyata, Manu, Yama, and a step-brother Kapiti, were the offspring of the Sun. The king Samhanu was married to Iaputa and the Lunar dynasty descended from him. The list of kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties do not justify the claim that they belonged to different cycles of time as *Frata* and *Dvapara*, as is generally held and believed.

Very interesting particulars about the Indian Epic are found in *Devi Bhagavata*, which is more important and trustworthy than the mere imagination of the present-day writers, as there were greater chances of arriving at the truth then than now. Sri Krishna established the worship of the goddess Sarasvati (9th Skanda, *Slinda Purana*, 4th Chapter). Vyasa and Valmiki were contemporaries and the former sought the latter's advice before he undertook the great task (*Ibid*, 5th Chapter). The true meaning of the word *Nirodha*, mentioned in the invocation verse, is one who is well versed in *Veda* and *Vedangas*, into whose ears the Vishnu mantritions were poured and whose blith absolves the forefathers from sin (*Ibid*, 7th Chapter). Vyasa and Narada discoursed in the said *Purana* (3rd Skanda, 2nd Chapter).

The *Astika Parva* gives an insight into the original and subsequent versions of the *Mahabharata*. These were conflicting versions, that the original portion was according to the White Yajus and it was converted into Black Yajus, as is referred to in the twentieth chapter of the *Astika Parva* in the colour of the tail of the horse *Uchhasrava*. The reference to Krishna Veda in the table of contents makes it quite clear. The Nagas were the followers of the Black Yajus and the Parikshits were followers of the White Yajus, and in the great fight that took place in the sacrifice over the two kinds

of Yajus the Black came out victorious in the sense that the White Yajus failed to annihilate the Black. Yajnavalkya's edition of the Epic was introduced as the triumph of the Black Yajus. There was a Yajnavalkya Gotra among Vasishtas also.\*

"The Bharata poem belongs to the West, the region about Delhi, the Kamayana, to the East to Oudh, the region north of Benares. Nevertheless, the style of the two Epics is so far related as to be formed to a great extent on identical phraseology. Both Epics have the same proverbs and know the same stories. All of this shows that the ancient tale of the North West has been transplanted into the seat of culture about Benares and that the Mahabharata was completed where the Kamayana began. "I may add that all the literary indications point to this explanation, such, for example, as that the tales woven into the later Epic are almost always set about the lower Ganges." "To turn from the finished product to the origin of these two poems which arose far apart but ended in the same literary environment of the source of the Kamayana there is little to say, for it is attributed as definitely and regularly to Valmiki as is the *Aeneid* to Vergil, whom the Hindu author preceded by several centuries. Now tradition ascribes the great Epic also—that is, the Mahabharata (which means the great Bharata story and so may be called simply the Bharata)—to a certain Vyasa, but this Vyasa is a very shadowy person to whom is ascribed also the arrangement of the Vedas and other works, his name meaning merely arranger or disposer. In fact his name probably covers a guild of revisers and re-tellers of the tale. Moreover, there is internal evidence that the poem has been re-written. There is, in a word, no one author of the great Epic. It was handed down piece meal, at first in ancient lays. These became recitations and, united with heterogeneous material of all sorts, were at last bound together as one loosely connected whole." "The manner of presenting the primitive lays out of which arose the first Epic stories was as follows. At a certain point in the performance of a sacrifice the ritual demanded that two or three singers should step forward with lutes or lyres in their hands, and, to quote verbatim from the antique directions given for the ceremony: 'They shall then sing the king or some other brave hero' and the subject shall be 'this king fought in such a battle,' 'this hero won such a victory. Here we have recorded in a formal rule of the ancient ritual the very same conditions, harring the sacrifice, as those which gave rise to the Greek Epic, the rhapsode singing them, and so, later on, we find that in India also, the song changes to recitation. But in India, Epic recitation never became a mere reading, except to the learned."†

Durjodhana did not play dice like Birata with Yudhishthira but employed Sakuni to play and deceived him. Birata had angrily struck his body with the instrument of play and shed his blood, but did not wound his heart by his conduct as did Sakuni, though he did not wound Yudhishthira's body. Draupadi did not feel dishonoured so much by the plain proposal of Kichak, the brother-in-law of king Birata, as she was by the insult of Durjodhana and his brother and friend, Karna, etc. Abhimanyu sacrificed his life for the cause of his father and family like a true hero, but Asvathama in spite of being a great warrior, avenged the

\* Mat. 200, 6 Prof. Pargiter's Note page 237

† Dr. Hopkins' 'India Old and New', pages 63-69.



death of his revered father not in the battlefield but at dead of night under cover of darkness and sleep by smothering them like a thief and secret assassin Drona wanted help from king Drupada in fulfilment of a promise of school days. No better proof of idleness and covetousness could be illustrated

Bhima was not a passive instrument of his great brother Yudhishthira, like Dushasana. He showed his temper at the dice-play Regarding Karna and Sakuni the less said the better, as there is hardly anything vile with which they were not connected The piety of Karna as a man of his word and honour in refusing Sri Krishna's offer of an empire by his connection with Kunti by birth on the ground of its being a breach of faith with Durjodhana, fell to the ground when he acceded to the request of Kunti to spare the Pandava brothers (excepting Arjuna) behind Durjodhana's back Kunti's prayer he could not grant, but made a promise unknown to Durjodhana, which he should not have done if he were honest Arjuna lost his only son but did not leave the field and the war did not come to an end as the Kurus had thought it would and for which they led the loot and cruelly murdered the poor warrior boy in a helpless manner wholly against the canons of chivalry and battle. Yudhishthira, the king of justice and fair-play, in consideration of Arjuna's services and greatness passed the throne to his line The greatness of the Pandavas was displayed in their brotherly love in all their trials, which the Ramayana could not portray though the merit of its reading is said to increase brotherly love.

The character of Bibhisan in the Ramayana has passed into a proverb in common parlance Bharata's reverence of Rama by worshipping his sandals during his exile and Laksman's faithful adherence to his brother are no less prominent The dramatic Mahabharata goes further and tries to put Bibhisan and Karna somewhat in the same category by making Sri Krishna try to win the latter by the offer of a kingdom, as Rama Chandra did in the Ramayana, Book VI, Canto XIX. In the Ramayana the disgraced Bibhisan went to Rama, but in the case of Karna he was a child of disgrace, honoured by the enemies of the Pandavas Bibhisan betrayed Ravana openly Karna betrayed Durjodhana secretly in his promise to Kunti There is some sort of affinity between Bidur and Bibhisan also. Bidur was exiled by Dhritarastra but he did not go to the side of the Pandavas, like Bibhisan Karna was not a brother of the Pandavas but a courtier of Durjodhana If he had had the blood of the Sun he would not have stooped down to the low position of a courtier Bibhisan went to Rama for the throne and safety, but did not betray his brother privately, as Karna

he promise that

he would not kill the four Pandavas other than Arjuna. Bibhisan and Bidur were brothers of Ravana and Dhritarastha and their maxim may be said in the words of Bibhisan

"Thy rights O Ravan, I allow  
My brother and mine elder thou  
Such, though from duty's path they stray,  
We love like fathers and obey,  
But still too bitter to be borne  
Is thy harsh speech of cruel scorn  
Thou rich like thee, who spurn control  
Nor check one longing of the soul,  
Urged by malignant fate repel  
The faithful friend who counsels well  
A thousand courtiers wilt thou meet,  
With flattering lips of smooth deceit,  
But rare are they whose tongue or ear  
Will speak the bitter truth, or how  
Unclose thy blinded eyes and see  
That snares of death encompass thee."\*

To guard a woman from the hands of mischief is not in the power of kings or gods. The kings, like Rama and Yudhistira, could not protect their queens from being insulted and disgraced. There is a sort of resemblance between marriage and old age. Young men want to marry and like to be grey, but when they are in actual experience of these they are grieved. It is not the stone wall and powerful armies which protect an empire but the wise and the good are the real bulwarks of a nation. History is nothing but a philosophy. It teaches by example. Those that run after pleasure and sport come to grief for they bring loss of energy and power. It is for this the inspiration of Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, runs —

"No fame be thine for endless time,  
Because base outcast, of thy crime,  
Whose cruel hand was fair to slay  
One of this gentle pair at play

The gentle pair here is the great Rama and Sita, who were enjoying forest life in exile.

Curiosity is the instinct of youth. It allures people with strong attractions and makes them long for something new, as was the case with Rama in his pursuit of the golden deer. In youth levity is the jocund guiding star, veiling the future. This the poet depicts in the abduction of Sita by Ravana in the Ramayana.

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\* Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki," page 433, Canto XVI, Book VI

Man or woman did not spring up like a fungus and rot quickly on the spot, leaving no trace of his or her existence. Man creates his wants, which are the roots of all trouble. Poets present heroes and heroines placed in the throes of evil times and tragic circumstances, which show them in the true metal they are made of. Mere forms of beauty in man and woman cannot arouse delight at all times. 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever', is the creation of great poets who are immortalised as much as their heroes and heroines. He who is true and firm in will, will mould circumstances to himself. This is the truth the Indian Epics preach in their great ideals.

The cruel Ravina separated Rama and Sita in spite of his great enjoyment of long life through the boon of God. In Ravana the great poet presented to the world the picture of what pleasure could be derived from riches, powerful children like Meghanada, wives like Mandodari and royal power even subjecting gods, and how on account of his wickedness his golden kingdom vanished like a shadow through the energy of a man and his messenger Hanuman. The well-known proverb goes — "He that gathereth by labour shall increase." It is better not to be born at all than to lead a disgraceful life. This is the idea which ruled the sentiment of Ancient India and the pious queen Sita. She did not hate death with justice. She considered it to be a mighty remedy and so was the follower of the divine Parvati, the consort of the God Siva. It is not good to jeer at the dead. Gods care not for gifts, nor do they accept sacrifices or libations on any altar, nor do they care for a hymn of praise. Persuasion is the quality with which the gods are pleased. The dignity of chastity of Parvati and Sita is reflected in their deaths. Death alone is the physician of all worldly woes, to translate the great to the Heaven of Gods and the wicked to the Hell of Satan.

During the whole of one's life the child is either a cause of fear, labour or grief. This is the theme of the Indian Epics. Karna belonged to the family of the Sutas, the community of the reciters of king's praise and glory and they made Karna their great champion of valour and greatness, ascribing his birth to the great Sun-god and to Kunti, the great example of a Kshatriya mother. The self-sacrifice of Kunti was very great. She did not participate in the enjoyment of her son's victory but retired to the forest to practice religious asceticism, to bear the bereaved Dhritarastra and Gandhari company and to tend them in their distress. She was a princess of the old school. She suffered great miseries after the death of her husband in bringing up her children so that they might be glorious. She did not like her children to be like Durjodhana and Dushasana, wholly given up to enjoyment and

vanity Parents are more responsible for the upbringing of their children than the children themselves Alexander admitted it openly that he owed everything to his mother Sri Krishna, the ideal God, proved it in the destruction of the Kurus and their allies and so it was with the family of Yadus

No mortal sees God, but it is believed that He sees every human action There are two divisions of law, one written and the other unwritten What is the law of the land is made by law-givers and kings, but the one arising from nature and habit is called the unwritten law In the unwritten law conscience is the witness to what is done by man or woman It is the sacred spirit within one, the observer and guardian of what is good or bad to him or her The cause of a man's credibility is not in others but in his own character, which make his words held sacred and not a question of belief God loves to assist those in trouble, but the wicked in prosperity are not to be borne What greater pair is there on earth than when power and justice unite

Force attended by wisdom is a very great advantage, but when it is not so attended, it results in calamity and ruin The pleasant days of a woman are her marriage day as well as the day of funeral The vigour of a man is but for a day Labour upon labour comes for a few short, limited periods of years and death is unavoidable The good and the bad have got an equal share of it No one is fortunate throughout his life One cannot conduct his household affairs and carry on the object or creation without a woman The great sages like Visvamitra and Bharadvaja could not escape from the scourge of passion How to live when there is plenty of time to die is the question of all questions

The civilisation of India is the civilisation of a country where the literature of the Vedas, Upanishads, etc., sprang up and expanded The great question of all times has been whether circumstances command man or man commands circumstances, which, in other words, is the vexed question of the doctrine of necessity or free-will A man suffers for his own actions but blames the Almighty Father out of idleness, saying that he is a creature of circumstance

The Epic characters must be judged in the light of the circumstances and the times in which they flourished In a court of justice it is not always that the right and just side wins, for there are various factors which go to make for success, viz, the merit of the judge, the capacity and calibre of the advocate and the intelligence and diligence of the client The Mahabharata is a book of the Greater India and not of a particular part of it like the Ramayana, which is supposed to

symbolise the spread of civilisation to Southern India and Ceylon. The whole of India was represented in the great fight of Kurukshetra. A real history of Ancient India was not in existence and everything had to be gleaned from the records of ancient customs, manners, habits, food, drink, mode of living, society, civilisation, law and religion.

The Epics did not speculate on human fate by drama-writing but were manuals of religious lessons and preached the form of religion most acceptable to God. Customs generally depend on national institutions and the profligacy and vices of individuals are exposed so that they may not infect the whole nation. The law strives to punish the guilty in order that they may not influence the mass by their example. The man who has real fortitude and magnanimity is not blown about by every random gust but shows his virtues under the most trying and adverse circumstances. There can be no real desire to imitate virtue unless the person who sets the example of virtue be lovable and estimable. To do this has been one of the most important aims of the Epics.

The examples and anecdotes do not belong to any particular class or tract of the country but to the whole of India as a unit. A man or a woman is subject to passions in youth. There is a war of passion in every being, and he who is vanquished by passion becomes a slave and is liable to death, but he who overcomes it becomes a hero and immortal. This is the lesson the Indian Epics preach in their ideal heroes and heroines. God is revealed in them, and the Epics become revelations. The Epics describe tyrants in their golden cities wallowing in sensuality with ten heads or a thousand hands but who are not contented and ultimately die at the hands of poor sages in the woods who stuck to truth and wisdom and were not drawn aside by misfortune or adversity. Bali, the greatest and most powerful king of the Asuras, was sent to the nether world by the beggar Dwarf (Baman). It showed that both extreme vanity or depravity in a king disqualify him for heaven. The Epics unfold the past and give a history of the past through their heroes and heroines. A deep and careful study of old literature is necessary for a proper insight into this.

The lives and deeds of past heroes are depicted in the Epics in a more life-like way than in sculpture or painting. They shed lustre on the dark ages in which they flourished, advancing the spread of civilisation through the regions and tracts they traversed in their heroic adventures. Heroes, who raised themselves above their neighbours excited their jealousy by their excessive splendour, and came to be loved only after their death, such was the case with the Pandavas, and Vyasa wrote the Epic after they had gone to their rest.

The Indian Epics have two sides, *viz* —the material and the spiritual. Material prosperity depended upon spiritual greatness and did not depend so much upon the merit of the previous birth as the Yoga system of philosophy adumbrates and the Gita propounds. The Pandavas did not attain their greatness through any merit earned in previous lives. Material prosperity or earthly happiness, on the other hand, often led to sorrow and punishment, as is shown in the case of the heavenly king Mahavisa being transformed into King Santanu, of the divine Basu being transformed into Bhishma and Indra into Pandavas, so also Yajati fell from heaven and king Nahusa too fell from heaven and was transformed into a snake. The powerful brothers of Yudhisthira died, being unable to answer the questions of Yaksha in the form of a crane. All these bear out that the Indian Epics preach the tale of spiritual greatness more than material prosperity and inculcate that real and lasting happiness and bliss can be had only from spiritual excellence.

The story of Aswatthwama killing Abhimanyu's child in the embryo and Krishna neutralising the power of the ascetic Brahmin bears it out. Krishna did not bring the child back to life as a God, but he did it by invoking the powers of religious merit he attained as a man who had practised virtue and had never told a lie in his life. And, in passing, it should be noticed that this makes it inconceivable how such a man of truth and virtue could instigate another great apostle of virtue and truth to tell a lie to kill Drona by a false report of his son Aswatthwama's death. The symbolical meaning is nothing but this, that Sri Krishna made Aswatthwama die when the latter's boasted powers were rendered powerless by Sri Krishna, for the Mahabharata describes various kinds of death and one of them is bragging. These stories were introduced by the rhapsodists and the later revisers to create amusement while they lost sight of the real significance of the original themes. And such amusing stories in the popular editions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are not wanting. The introduction of the story of Yavanas issuing from the disinherited heirs of Yajati is another instance of such an addition, which was done during the Moghul rule in India to induce inter-marriage between the Moghul princes and Rajput princesses, who were great believers in the Epics.

The superiority of the great Indian Epic Mahabharata over the other Epics of the world lies in the sublime grandeur of the portraiture of the greatness of spiritual excellence of Yudhisthira. One instance of it, amidst a hundred others, is the picture of Durjodhana's going into the forest where the Pandava brothers were living as exiles, to inflict pain on them by the display of his royal grandeur, and

Yudhishthira's act of generosity towards him in saving his life and honour. Duryodhana had robbed Yudhishthira of his kingdom, wealth, hearth and house and had exiled him with his brothers to the woods and reduced them to the extremest poverty and privations. To add insult to injury, he, decking himself and his queen in full regal pomp and splendour, went on a visit to the same forest where Yudhishthira and the others were living in exile with a view to inflict pain on them, and Draupadī, by a show of his and his queen's majestic splendour and power. But on the way they were defeated in a fight with the Gandharvas and taken prisoners. Yudhishthira, on hearing of Duryodhana's and his queen's sad plight and danger, sent his brothers and told the Gandharvas that so long as they were alive they could not bear and suffer his cousin and his wife to be so humiliated and ill-treated, and liberated Duryodhana, etc., from impending captivity and death.

A more sublime and superb picture of generosity and spiritual greatness is impossible and is nowhere to be seen. All the pomp and power of Yudhishthira's kingdom Duryodhana had stolen as it were by a stroke of deceitful dice-play and Yudhishthira could have recovered all in one stroke, on having vanquished the vanquisher of Duryodhana, but the virtuous and generous Yudhishthira did not do so. He acted here more like a God of divine and universal love than a human being.

Fame is the noblest of all human possessions which survives after death and is the most valuable of all legacies to history. Art and poetry draw their food from the field of death, while in actual life success and victory crown the head of the hero. The genius of Vyasa and Valmiki made their heroes and heroines ever fresh and alive in the reader's mind. Their heroes and heroines, evergreen and living, speak the joys and miseries of life with their hearts silent in blissful joy of eternity. They are always remembered in their deeds and the world pays tribute by following them with a sincere heart. Honour to them, who were united as one in man and woman in the fascinating bond of human creation. All honour to that noble lady who wielded the sceptre of a queen which united the five attributes of kingly virtues. All glory to the five Pandava brothers! who could have played fierce fiends as Duryodhana tried to make them in the Dice Hall but failed.

It is not the flesh and blood but the heart that makes one feel the love of a father, a mother, a brother, a husband, a wife, a son, a daughter. The man who fears no one is no less powerful than the one who is feared by every one. Power of virtue reigns supreme. How pleasant it is to be lulled into that sleep of death from whose bourne the heroes and heroines return to receive tribute from the world, as it

were. This is the true meaning of Yudhishthira's passing to Heaven in person. How happy was that marriage where all the Pandavas were united and married together by the spirit of peace, making relation with the whole world as one family and not selfishly confining it to a limited circle but like a god making connection with all. How divine is the picture of Sri Krishna! Christ-like and weaned from his parents, encircled by enemies, kings, serpents, demons in the forms of relatives like Kamsa, Sisupala, Kaliya Naga, Bakasura, Putana, etc., eager and ready to do him mischief from his infancy but unable to do him anything of the sort and dying in their vain attempt. What a noble picture of a mother! who led a life of suffering for her children and forbore to share the enjoyment of a kingdom when her sons succeeded to the throne by their victory in the great war, preferring to retire to the woods to practise religious austerities for her children's welfare. Just when the actual time for enjoyment came, Kunti retired to the woods, parting with the Pandavas in sorrow.

The zest of life loses its great point when the wit is first to laugh and not to realise the true implications of the great characters the Epics describe and illustrate. What is here in the earth below a temporary affliction in the midst of joy will be in Heaven eternal triumph, and what is here temporary triumph of happiness in case of tyrants like Ravana and Duryodhana proved eternal sorrow, everlasting despair ending in death and shame leading the way to Hell and damnation. Real heroes do not devote their thoughts to winning temporal blessings, only to part with them in sorrow. Against this the great Epic warns by examples to make the world follow the right path of virtue.

The blind Dhritarastra, unwieldy monster, threatened to swallow up his dependent nephews by the plot of burning the lac house, his son Duryodhana fleeced them of their everything at the dice-play, and when everything had failed the old wretch made his last attempt to wreak vengeance and rattled his heavy bones to crush Bhima, the most powerful of all the Pandavas at whose hands all his sons had gone to eternal rest. The wealth and kingdom the Pandavas raised by the fruits of learning and skill were robbed by the wicked to forestall and justify their death on the battlefield. To those who are in favour of the theory that might creates right, they may say, the Mahabharata describes the greatness of the Kurus and that Karna, Bhishma, Drona, Duryodhana are the heroes. But to those who believe that he who has been shown as the best ideal of his time, has lived for ages, then Yudhishthira stands pre-eminent. If the possession of the right sort of chivalry of the age be esteemed, best of all then, Arjuna, who was not a war-broom like Karna, Bhishma and Drona, would stand foremost. If the scope of mind-making relationship



with the spirit above, if not union, be most valuable; then come the names of Kunti and Draupadi. Sri Krishna led the Pandavas as a charioteer at the great battle with the blowing of the well-known conch Panchajanya, announcing as it were that all events in the world are God's arbitrament, as he actually did in the fight over the winning of Draupadi at her Svayambara marriage as well as at the deciding issue of the great battle in the club fight between Bhima and Durjodhana.

Human thoughts and deeds are not like ocean billows that beat the shore without any aim. Man is made and grown like the fruits of a tree. He can only be kept intact by proper education. Mere landmarks or footsteps in the sands of time cannot guide one who wants to be the beau-ideal of the world for all time to come. The age in which Yudhishthira and Sri Krishna flourished was marked with a war existing between cunning and suspicion, when misery ran free through the whole of India, and deep remorseless rage prevailed without a recognised leader, as is clear from what took place in the Rajsuya sacrifice of Yudhishthira. The great lesson of the age seems to have been preached by Yudhishthira after his dream after the great sacrifice of Rajsuya.

'Let him learn to be content even if he is to lose what he possesses. Set not thy heart on the enjoyments of the world for life of enjoyments is not the be all and end-all of human existence. No sacrifice is too dear for the true ideal of life and its consummation. Man who realises his own power of understanding, finds the will and spirit of God in the silent working of the inner soul, exalted reason and conscience. Life is a question of living with honour and good name. Prudence knows how to overcome misfortune however heavy and how to bear with patience whatever sorrow may befall. No virtue can be genuine unless it is tried. The Soul of man rests in peace where honour is well established. Reason and conscience are more valuable treasures than sovereignty or riches which can only satisfy the cravings of flesh and blood.'

All these the great Indian Epic wonderously depicts where the lessons of practical life in the moral and spiritual atmosphere are ever-green and refreshing and the heroes and heroines move with greater glory and the halo of divine light around them. Poets like Vyasa and Shakespeare presented to the world that cowards die many deaths but the wise never die but live in the annals of time more esteemed than when they actually lived and moved. Yudhishthira, the last ideal king of India from whose reign an era is running and is given in the Hindu Almanac with the names of his successors even now, did not leave any heir by Draupadi to succeed to his throne. Religious piety and virtue cannot be the property of any one by reason of descent or heredity. If it was so, Yudhishthira would have acquired it by virtue of being a son of Dharma, as he was alleged to be. Bhima would not require any practice to conquer the sons of Dhritarastra, who were persecuting him from his infancy as he was alleged to be the son of the Wind, the most

powerful Similarly Arjuna would not require initiation in arms by practical training at the time of the forest life of the Pandavas. In the world everything has to be acquired by education and labour.

This is the first lesson of the great Epic in the opening section Human life is divided into different stages The first part is spent in learning discipline and training the intellectual capacities to enable one to stand on one's own legs in the world and to perform one's legitimate functions with credit The second is spent in putting into practice what one has learnt and realised in the field of morality and politics The third is to move in the spiritual sphere quite apart from the material field of action, to realise true love And the fourth is either to train the future hopefuls by example or to be prepared for departure from this world leaving foot-prints on the sands of time for the future generation This was the aim and object of the ancient ideal human life Fortitude, perseverance, firmness and wisdom are the common fruits of ancient education in India, but universal love was a divine attribute, realisation of which helped one to ascend to heaven One must give up the love of passion Rama Chandra, for that purpose, was extolled as an ideal monarch Yudhishthira was likewise extolled for patiently bearing the persecutions and the insult and calumny on his near and dear ones, *e.g.*, his mother Kunti, his wife Draupadi and his brothers, which no human being could do in the circumstances in which he fell.

The Bharata Samhita, which owed its origin to the Vedas and Vedangas, existed before Valmiki and Vyasa and dealt with the duties of men in the different stages of life and the two distinct paths of religion, *viz.*, one, for those who renounced the world, and the other, for those who held that one must pass through domestic love and study, by controlling the senses, and realising and worshipping divine love Narayana, Sanat Kumara, Narada, Brihaspati, Bhrigu and others were such great sages The great Epic Mahabharata gives what Vyasa made from the materials that had existed before him, in the discourses between Manu, Narada, Kapila, Sanat Kumara and others, which were quoted along with Pancharatra, etc The traditions handed down as illustrations of intricacies on morality, religion and philosophy were not left out The Ramayana says —

“ Thus good Valmiki, sage divine,  
Rehearsed the Tale of Raghu's line,  
As Narada, heavenly saint, before  
Had traced the story's outline o'er ”  
.. .. ..

‘ And many a tale and legend old  
By holy Visvamitra told ”

"After listening to the various sacred and wonderful stories of the Mahabharata composed by Krishna Dwaipayana,—those that were fully recited by Vaishampayana at the great Snake sacrifice held by that noble-hearted royal sage, the prince of all princes, the son of Parikshit, Janmejaya,"† he wanted to hear more on certain specified questions. But there is another version in Chapter V, in the questions and answers as will appear. Sounaka said.—"I am desirous of hearing the history of the Vṛgu race (3)" Souti said "What has also been studied by my father has been acquired by me (5)" Chapter XII, verse 6, Ruru, the grandson of Chyavana heard the story of Asuka from his father Pramati which Souti describes in the next Chapter XIII, 6 verse: "The Brahmanas call this history recited by Krishna Dwaipayana, a Purana His father Lomaharsana, a disciple of Vyasa, recited it to the dwellers of Naimisharanya, he heard it from him" Chapter XVI amplifies it Chapter XLIX describes the death of King Parikshit in answer to a question by Sounaka The real answer to the first question begins with Chapter LX, verses 18—20 This is the real beginning of the Souti edition of the Mahabharata Chapter LXII says —'(verse 12) Vaisampayana said in answer to questions put by king Janmejaya in the following verses: 'O great King! Appoint a time to hear it This history is very extensive' He did not recite it in the Snake sacrifice but Harivamsa says it was recited in the Horse sacrifice of Janmejaya. Verse 39 in Chapter LXII, Adi Parva, explains the origin of the name of the great Epic as the history of the Bharata princes borne out in Chapter XCIX, verse 48, in the very version of Vaisampayana, and it begins with the account of King Santanu in Chapter C. It will thus appear that the original Mahabharata is not connected with the Pandavas The Mahabharata of the Pandavas might have been composed after the Ramayana of Valmiki The Devi Bhagabata mentions that Vyasa sought advice from Valmiki before publishing his Mahabharata

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† The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 9—11

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seven horses of the Sun, seven tongues of fire, seven colours, seven notations of music, seven Samas, seven days in a week, seven limbs of the body politic, seven generations, seven paces in a marriage ceremony and so forth. In the days, of science, astronomy and astrology the planets were propitiated and they are nine in number and the sun was the regent of the planets who presided over human destiny.

The Sun was worshipped by Yajnavalkya and he discovered the Vedas worshipping the Sun. Yudhisthira in his exile worshipped the Sun and received the boon of finding food without the kingdom as a gift. It may mean that the great king utilised the forest life with the cultivation of the waste land and made India prosperous, as the incarnation of God was plough-bearing Balarama and not Sri Krishna. It will be seen that the Bharata Samhita is the nucleus of the Indian Epics and the Bharata princes descended from the sons of Bharata. Bharadvaja was closely connected with the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and his son Drona played an important part in the great plot of the Kuru-Pandava Mahabharata.

Bharata is the brother of Rama, the other of that name to whom the name of Bharatavarsha owed its origin and another the famous king Bharata, son of the well-known Dushmanta and Sakuntala, grandson of the royal sage Visvamitra, who was equally connected with the Ramayana. The sages Vasistha, Bhrigu and Agastya were no less famous and played conspicuous parts in the two Epics. The Nahusa and Agastya incidents connect the Mahabharata with the Pandava Yudhisthira which is very interesting. This is the real beginning of the great Epic, if the truth be told, of the edition with which the great Pandava Yudhisthira was connected. It runs as follows —

“Bhisma said —The royal sage Nahusa, O monarch, having penances for wealth, acquired the sovereignty of the celestial region by his own good deeds. With controlled senses, O king, he lived in the celestial region, engaged in doing diverse acts of both human and celestial nature. From that great king flowed various kinds of human acts and various kinds of celestial deeds, also, O king. The various rites with respect to the sacrificial fire, the collection of sacred fuel and of Kusha grass, as also of flowers and the presentation of Vali consisting of food adorned with fried paddy, and the offer of incense and of light,—all these, O monarch, occurred daily in the house of that great king while he lived in the celestial region. Indeed, though living in the celestial region he celebrated the sacrifice of recitation and the sacrifice of meditation. O chastiser of foes, Nahusa, although he had become the king of the deities, yet adored all the deities, as he used to do formerly, with due rites and ceremonies. Some time after, Nahusa realized his position as the king of all the deities. This filled him with pride. From that time all his deeds were suspended. Filled with pride on account of the boon he had received from all the celestials, Nahusa caused the very Rishis to bear him on

their shoulders. On account, however, of his abstention from all religious acts, his energy began to wane. The time was very long for which Nahusa filled with arrogance, continued to employ the foremost of Rishis, having penances for wealth, as the bearers of his vehicles. He made the Rishis perform by turns this humiliating work. The day came when it was Agastya's turn to carry the vehicle, O Bharatas! at that time, Bhṛigu, that foremost of all persons conversant with Brahman, went to Agastya. While the latter was seated in his hermitage, and addressing him said—'O great ascetic, why should we patiently suffer such indignities inflicted on us by this wicked Nahusa who has become the king of the deities? Agastya said—'How can I succeed in cursing Nahusa, O great Rishi? You know how the boon-giving (Brahman) himself has given Nahusa the best of boons. Coming to the celestial region, the boon that Nahusa prayed for, was that, whoever would come within the range of his vision, would be deprived of all energy and come within his control. The self-born Brahman granted him this boon, and it is therefore that neither yourself nor I have been able to consume him. Forsooth, it is for this reason that no one else amongst the foremost of Rishis has been able to consume or throw him down from his elevated position. Formerly, O lord, nectar was given by Brahman to Nahusa for drinking. Therefore we can do nothing to him. The great god, it appears, gave that boon to Nahusa for plunging all creatures into grief. That wretched man behaves most unrighteously towards the brahmanas. O foremost of all speakers, tell us what should be done under the circumstances. Forsooth, I shall do what you will advise.' Bhṛigu said—'It is at the command of the Grandfather that I have come to you with the view of counteracting the power of Nahusa, who is gifted with great energy but who has been stupefied by fate. The exceedingly wicked being who has become the king of the celestials, will to day yoke you to his car. With the help of my power I shall to day hurl him down from his position as Indra on account of his having transcended all restraints. I shall to day, in your very sight, re-establish the true Indra in his position,—him, viz., who has celebrated a hundred horse sacrifices,—having hurled the wicked and sinful Nahusa from that seat. That impious king of the celestials will to day insult you by a lack, on account of his understanding being afflicted by fate and for bringing about his own downfall. Luraged at such an insult I shall to day curse that sinful wretch, that enemy of the brahmanas, who has transcended all restraints, saying,—Be you metamorphosed into a snake. Before your eyes, O great ascetic, I shall to day hurl down on the earth the wicked Nahusa who shall be deprived of all power on account of the cries of 'Eio' that will be uttered from all sides. Indeed, I shall hurl down Nahusa to-day, that sinful man, who has, besides, been stupefied by lordship and power. I shall do this, if you like it, O ascetic.' Thus addressed by Bhṛigu, Mitra-aruna's son Agastya, of unfading power and glory, became highly pleased and freed from every anxiety."

'Bhisma said—The king of the celestials, on account of his abstention from observing the ordinances about the offers of incense and light, began to decline in power. His sacrificial rites and presents were obstructed by Rishis. It was at this time that Nahusa yoked that foremost of Rishis, viz., Agastya, to his car. Possessed of great strength Nahusa smiling all the while, set that great Rishi speedily to the task, commanding him to bear the vehicle from the back of the Sarasvati. At this time, Bhṛigu, possessed of great energy, addressed the son of Mitra-aruna, saying—'Do you shut your eyes till I enter into the material body

on your head.—Having said this, Bhrigu of unfading glory and great energy entered into the matted locks of Agastya, who stood still like a wooden post, for hurling king Nahusa from the throne of Heaven. Soon after Nahusa saw Agastya approach him, for bearing his car. Seeing the king of the celestials, Agastya addressed him, saying —‘Do you yoke me to your vehicle forthwith’ To what region shall I bear you O lord of the celestials, I shall bear you to the spot which you may be pleased to direct’!—Thus addressed by him, Nahusa caused the ascetic to be yoked to his car. Bhrigu, who was living within the matted locks of Agastya, became highly pleased at this act of Nahusa. He took care not to look at Nahusa. Fully acquainted with the power which the illustrious Nahusa had acquired on account of the boon which Brahman had granted him Bhrigu acted thus. Agastya also though treated by Nahusa in this way, did not yield to anger. Then, O Bharata, king Nahusa urged Agastya on with his goad. The pious Rishi did not still yield to anger. The lord of the celestials, himself enraged, then struck Agastya on the head with his left foot. When the Rishi was thus struck on the head, Bhrigu, who was living within Agastya’s matted locks, became incensed and cursed the sinful Nahusa saying —‘Since you have struck with your foot on the head of this great Rishi, do you, therefore, fall down on the Earth, changed into a snake. O wretch of wicked understanding—Thus, imprecated by Bhrigu who had not been seen, Nahusa, forthwith became transformed into a snake and dropped down on the Earth. O chief of Bharata’s race!—If, O monarch, Nahusa had seen Bhrigu, the latter would not then have succeeded, by his power, in hurling the former down on the Earth. On account of the various gifts that Nahusa had made, as also his penances and religious observances, though hurled down on the Earth, O King, he succeeded in keeping his memory. He then began to propitiate Bhrigu with a view to get rid of the curse. Agastya also, filled with mercy, joined Nahusa in pacifying Bhrigu for the termination of the curse. At last Bhrigu felt mercy for Nahusa and arranged for the working out of the curse. Bhrigu said —‘There will appear a king (on Earth) of the name of Yudhishthira, the foremost of his race. He will rescue you from this curse!’—Having said this, the Rishi disappeared from the presence of Nahusa. Agastya also, of great energy, having thus performed the business of the true Indra, that arbitrator of a hundred sacrifices, returned to his hermitage, adored of all members of the regenerate order.”\*

It is evident that when the Pandava king Yudhishthira flourished the Brahmans were degraded from their original position. Sri Krishna wanted them to be regenerated and the great war was waged to kill the Indian Epicurus Charvaka and his followers, not to speak of using the wealth not for luxury and tyranny but for relieving suffering humanity. Cows were the great wealth of Ancient India and with their milk the children were nursed and it also replaced animal food by the delicacies of butter, curd, etc., the favourite food of Sri Krishna. The names of Indian celebrities linger in the important events of their lives. The creator Daksha Prajapati first made a present to Shiva of a bull with a certain kine and the great god Shiva accepted the present. The bull became his carrier and he used the figure of a bull as the emblem

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\* The Mahabharata, Chapter C, Anushasana Parva, verses 13—31



on his banner, and he was known by the name of Brishavadhavaja.\* The gift of a cow is very much praised as it was a great source of blessing to all. Nahusa ransomed the sage Cyavana, whom the fishermen brought to the king, with the gift of a cow and not with any other wealth † The fishermen presented the cow to the sage Cyavana and went to heaven for the gift, being freed from every sin. The words of Cyavana speak of his poverty —

"Chayavana said —The eye of a poor or distressed person, the eye of an ascetic, or the eye of a snake of dreadful poison, consume a man with his very roots (even as a fire, that burning with the aid of the wind consumes a stack of dry grass or straw) I shall accept the cow that you wish to present me. Ye fishermen, freed from every sin, go ye to heaven forthwith, with these fishes also that ye have caught with your nets "‡

The boon with which the great king Nahusa was blessed, is worthy of notice. It is said —

"Then the highly energetic king Nahusa, that lord of all the Earth, filled with joy, O best of the Bharatas, said —'sufficient' Like a second Indra, the king of the celestials, he accepted the boon about his own sterility in virtue. The Rishis having granted him the boon, the delighted king adored them both with great respect "§

This king Nahusa was converted into a big snake by the curse of Bhrigu and he was released by Yudhishthira during his exile in the wood like Ahalya by Rama. All these read like romances. The salvation of soul rests on what is said in the quotation given below —(Vana Parva, Chapter CLXXXI, verses 42-43) —"Truthfulness, self-control, asceticism, benevolence, unenviousness and adherence to virtue and not birth or illustrious family are the true means of human salvation "

Nahusa is not mentioned as one of the celebrated kings in the table of contents of the great Epic, yet his account of Yudhishthira's advent on the earth like Bhagiratha is mentioned. The Sagar's sons were cursed by Kapila and Bhagiratha became famous by releasing them from the curse of the sage by diverting the sacred Ganges. The Ramayana gives an account of Nahusa's reigning in heaven at the time of the fight between Britta and Indra with the name of his father and grandfather and the place where the meeting of Pururaba with Urbasi took place. It was at the city of Pratisthana. Yayati is compared in Canto 68, verse 7, VII Book, as a controller of his senses and he is mentioned as one of the celebrated kings of India in the table of contents with the king Bhagiratha. Agastya was engaged by King Rama

\* The Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva, Chapter LXXVII, verses 27-28

† Ditto Chapters L and LI

‡ Anushasana Parva, Chapter LI, verses 33-39

§ The Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva, Chapter LI, verses 13-14.

to perform his horse sacrifice (41 Canto, Ramayana VII). In the Ramayana, Agastya played a very important part and was closely associated with Rama in his exploits. Rama and Nahusa thus became contemporary kings of India.

In verses 230—239, table of contents, the names of Pouranic kings are found. The names of Rama and Nahusa are not mentioned amongst them. Although it is clearly said that there were many others who were not mentioned, yet it must be inferred that such great characters like Rama and Nahusa could not have escaped notice if they belonged to Pouranic Yuga. The name of Janmejaya was there amongst the list of celebrated kings but that of Parikshit is nowhere, although the great Epic mentions no less than three names belonging to different periods and one to the family of the Ikshaku. These are, of course the great riddles of the Indian Epics yet unsolved. The Puranas and Epics never meant to give the genealogies of the distinguished families of kings and their relationship. They were not the works of the bards or minstrels attached to the Royal houses, but when the Epics assumed that character, attempts were unsuccessfully made to trace the genealogies of kings from traditions more with a view to please the distinct royal families of kings or with a view to make future connections with other royal families in India than anything else.

Valmiki and Vyasa were Vedic scholars and glorious sages; their original works were lost in the revisions. Their disciples, Vaisampayana, Jaimini, Yajnavalkya published their versions, which were revised in the university of Saunaka and the Sutas recited them in the royal sacrifices. Thus the Indian Epics went on changing with the progress of time, introducing new characters like Bhishma, Drona and Karna. The Ramayana became the heroic poem of the Ikshakus but could not fully divest itself of the source from which it originated, *i.e.*, the Bharata Samhita.

If the current Mahabharata is carefully and critically read as a whole, noting the connecting links between the different divisions and the bearings of apparently isolated themes on the other themes, most of the doubtful problems will find solution. The first and foremost of all questions seems to be—what was the original theme of the great Epic?

All great works begin with a prologue and the great Epic is not without the traditional prologue. Souti, the renowned reciter, opens it as returning from the shrine of Samanta Panchaka or the five pools in Kurukshetra, where the great Brahmana warrior Avatar of Vishnu, Parasurama, is reputed to have offered oblations to the manes of his

ancestors with the blood of the Kshatriyas killed by him in his several crusades against them. It is thus to be seen that Parasurama is represented to have established hagiarchy in India. The Brahmanas from the days of King Vena are represented to have been the king-makers of India and the Mahabharata is not so much a tale of Kshatriya valour and prowess on the field of Kurukshetra as of the supremacy and omnipotence of the sages and the Brahmanas whose powers, more effective and deadly than of the Gods themselves, are represented to have performed miracles and prodigies and created kings and kingdoms or hurled them down to eternal perdition as they chose by the simple fiat of their will.

The sage Agastya, entreated by the Gods, quaffed off the whole ocean, the foot-print of Bhrigu adorns the breast of Vishnu, Kasyapa banished the terrific Parasurama outside the Aryabarta, Indra could not kill Asuras without the help of Dadhichi's bone and the help of Vashistha or Brihaspati, Chyavana forced Indra to agree to give a share of sacrificial oblations to the Asvini Kumars and the sage Astika saved the fall of Indra into the sacrificial fire of Janmejaya by the powers of his asceticism. Rama, an Avatar of God, could not kill Ravana without the assistance of the sage Agastya. The sages Parasara and Chanda-bhargava could think of exterminating whole races of demons and serpents by performing sacrifices and would have done it if they were not prevailed upon to desist from the same. The sages Jaya and Upjaya, like Rishyasringa, could, by sacrifices, bring about the birth of heroes who could kill Drona, Bhishma and Ravana. In short, there was nothing human or superhuman which the ancient Brahman sages and saints of India could not accomplish.

The Mahabharata in this sense is a sort of hagiology and depicts a hagiarchy in the renowned eleven victories of Parasurama over Kshatriya kings like Kartavirjirna in Ancient India. The great Epic speaks of the greatness of the sage Utanka in the first Parva Pousya and Asvamedha Parva too, the greatness of the Bhrigu family in the Poulama Parva, Bana, and Anushasana also and in Astika and other Parvas, and of the mighty deeds and powers of sages, mightier than the powers of arms of the heroes of the Kurukshetra field. The powerful Kings Dasaratha, Pandu and Parikshita died from the effects of curses of Brahmanas. The great King Nahusa went to heaven and was not only hurled down from it but was transformed into a snake and was not released until Yudhishthira enlightened him with the glory and attributes of a Brahman. All these speak of hagiarchy and hagiology as also a sort of hagiolatry in the Indian Epics.

The great Epic in Santi and Anushasana Parvas gives the great warning counsels in the Aila-Kasyapa and Pabana-Arjuna discourses to the famous progenitors of the two lines of ancient kings of India to show respect to Brahmans otherwise malice between them brings forth disastrous results in destruction and disruption. Gifts to priests are urged in the Anushasana Parva and are considered to be the great redeemers of all sins of omission or commission on the earth below. The Indian Epics disclose the different schools of thought of ancient India with the theories, tenets and practices of the different schools, illustrated by telling impressive stories and anecdotes, and they are not mere heroic poems narrating only great achievements of renowned heroes and heroines after the manner of the literal 'Epic'.

The Ramayana without its two component parts Adhyata and Yogavasistha cannot be called complete by itself, like the Mahabharata. The Adhyatma Ramayana is attributed to Vyasa as it belongs to the Vedantist School and philosophy, whereas Yogavasistha Ramayana is but an appendage to the Ramayana by Valmiki himself in the form of illustrative anecdotes narrated by Vasistha, the great priest of the Ikshaku family of Kings, to his illustrious pupil Rama on the subject of the best means of attaining true felicity and happiness on the earth below and in heaven above.

The Epics bear definite internal evidence in the very many discourses not only for the solutions of the several knotty problems which have puzzled the intelligent world but also to show the different stages of development of the Epics, fixing the periods of the different revisions and marking the interpolations. Vyasa, Valmiki, or Vaisampayana had nothing to do with the Yoga system of philosophy or the theory of transmigration of souls with which Patanjali and Yajnavalkya were identified. Vyasa and Valmiki were Vedic scholars and grammarians and the Mahabharata is a contribution to dispense with the reading of the Vedas, making it accessible to the mass. The particular school of Yajurvedic priests transformed the original Bharata Samhita as a manual of Yajurvedic sacrifices and rituals and it was hence called "the birth place of the warrior caste". Weber has shown that the Satapatha Brahmana, a text of Yajur Veda, stands in peculiarly close relation to the didactic Epic. It is said that the Vaisyas are derived from the Rig Veda, the Kshatriyas from the Yajur Veda, and the Brahmans from the Sama Veda. In Gita the Sama Veda stands as the best (Chapter X, verse 22) and its position with the Yajur is not made clear. It is clear in the ode to God by sage Upamanyu in the Anushasana Parva, Chapter XIV, verse 319, "Thou art the Sama Veda

among the Vedas, the Satarudria among the Yajur hymns, Sanatkumara among Yogins and Kapila among Samkhya." This Upamanyu is mentioned as a pupil in the Pousya Parva. That the Yoga system of philosophy is connected with the Epics as well as Samkhya is also evident. Patanjali admits a Pandu Epic in his account of the dramatic representation of the sacred legend indissolubly connected with the tale (390 Hopkins). The sage Astika, who stopped the snake sacrifice of King Janmejaya, was found to be present when the king saw his dead father Parikshit and the sage Saurika saw his dead son Srungi through the religious asceticism of Vyasa, who in like manner assuaged the grief of the bereaved family of the dead heroes who fell in the field of Kurukshetra. This proves the theory of Satapatha Brahman and the Yoga system of philosophy with which Yajnavalkya and Patanjali were identified. In the table of contents of the Mahabharata it is mentioned as Karsnaveda which, no doubt, refers not to such Yajur Veda of Yajnavalkya, though a Western scholar wrongly supposed it to refer to Krishna worship (Macdonald).

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana owed their origin to the Bharata Samhita, which began with the discourses between Brahma and Rudra, Narayana and Narada, Sanat Kumar and Narada, Narada and King Saptajit, Narada and Vyasa, Vyasa and Suka, and the Bharata Samhita seems to have been repeated in the time of King Santanu as Bhishma stated to Yudhishthira in Santi Parva as having heard it from King Santanu (Chapter CCCXXXVI) agreeing as it does with the table of contents in the Adi Parva beginning with the account of king Uparichar in the time of Svyambhubha Manu, when the worship of Narayana and Sarasvati is mentioned as is found in the well-known invocation verse. It was made by seven sages Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulasta, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasistha, who assumed the collective name of Chitrasakhandi. In that account a distinct reference is made to the Ramayana and the sages Ekata and Dvita were transformed into monkeys due to their malice towards their brother Trita, described in the Mahabharata (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXL, verses 83, 84). King Santanu heard this account from the mouth of the sage Asita Devala (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXL, verses 118 and 119).

The Mahabharata contains discourses between Sounaka and Janmejaya I, Sanatsujata and Dhritarashtra, Samjaya and Dhritarashtra, Krishna and Basudev, Bhishma and Yudhishthira, Krishna and Arjuna, Vaisampayana and Janmejaya II, Sauti and Sounaka, and last though not least between Yajnavalkya and Janaka, where it is very clearly mentioned that he undid the work of his uncle Vaisampayana out of spite

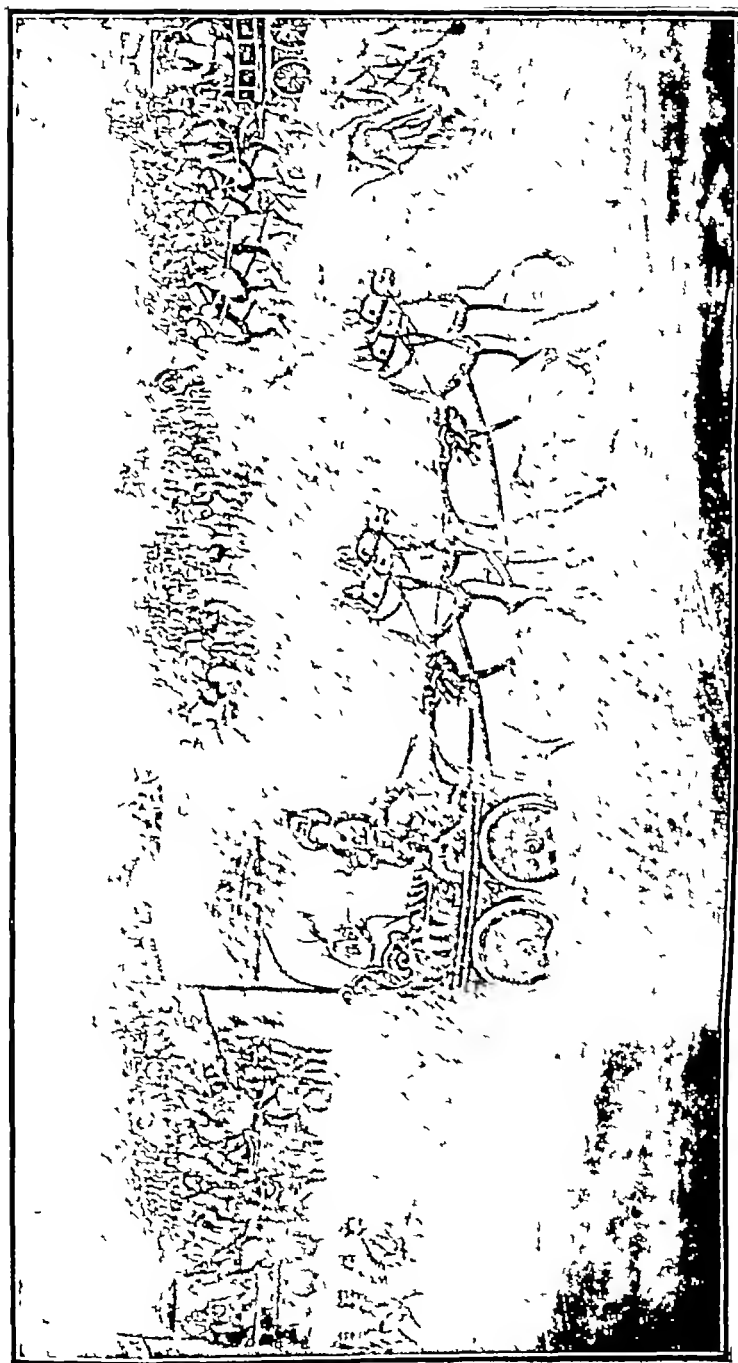
(Santi Parva, CCCXLIV) The Nara Narayana edition of the Mahabharata took place in King Satani's time—whose preceptor was Yajnavalkya—and he was the patron and propagator of the laws of Vishnu and declared the powers of Hari. Sounaka followed the King, heard the collection of the Mahabharata and composed the first Kalpasutra (*vide* Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p 231) King Satani was the son of Janmejaya and, being the direct descendant of Arjuna's line and connected on his mother's side with Sri Krishna and the Yadavas, he might have been interested in the Nara Narayana edition of the Mahabharata from the nucleus of Gita Upanishada. To solace the old king Dhritarastra, Samjaya first conceived the idea of ascribing the victory in the field of Kurukshetra to God Sri Krishna and not to the prowess of the Pandavas, as is clearly mentioned in the table of contents.

The eighteen Purans and the eighteen sections of the Mahabharata are ascribed to Vyasa. It may mean that Vyasa was the source of all the knowledge embodied in them and possibly Vyasa was not meant to be the actual author of all these different books, just like all publications under the name and authority of any University extending over a period of many years, may after a number of years be ascribed to the authorship of one man only.

The Asrambasika Parva describes the different appearances of the five Pandavas and their wives, where Yudhishthira among the Pandava brothers is named first, and Draupadi among the Pandava wives is named first, meaning her as the wife of Yudhishthira, and where Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeb are each separately named with the names of their respective wives. If Draupadi had been the wife of Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeb, her name would certainly have been mentioned while mentioning the names of the wives of the four junior Pandavas, which along with the other internal evidence shorn of the interpolations, show the utter baselessness of the tradition of Draupadi being the wife of all the five brothers.

The same Parva describes the characteristics of Dhritarastra and Kunti in their own words and also contains criticisms on the other characters of the Epic, and the Mousal Parva puts in the mouth of Arjuna that all the Pandavas and Draupadi were really one, which might mean that the five Pandavas were the five attributes of man essential for success and Draupadi was the personification of that success, or in other words, that Yudhishthira alone was the only original character in the Epic, the other brothers and Draupadi being fictitious personifications of the different attributes and success of Yudhishthira.





Sri Krishna remonstrates with Arjuna on the latter refusing to fight at the battle of Kurukshetra  
(Reproduced by kind permission of His Highness the Maharaja of Benares )



The great Epic represents Sri Krishna as having no concern with material success or prosperity, and shows Siva to be the God to be sought for material prosperity. In the Epic Sri Krishna never tells Arjuna that he would initiate him in his weapon, the Sudarsan Chakra, or that he would destroy the Kuru forces and secure him success. For weapons and success in war he advised Arjuna to worship Goddess Durga and Siva. Even Krishna himself, while desiring a son for his wife Satyabhama, is shown to have prayed to Siva. The Epic clearly represented Krishna as the dispenser of spiritual benefit and not material benefit. For such a Sri Krishna to tell Arjuna, as he is made to tell him in the Bhagabat Gita, that he had already killed all the Kuru forces etc. is a contradiction of a gross nature. Krishna is never shown in the Epic to have cursed anybody or to have granted any boon to anybody except to Utanka, *viz*, that he would be a cloud and supply water to the earth, which was of a spiritual nature, *ie*, for the good of the world by producing rain. The spiritual part of the fruition of this boon, *viz*., conversion of the cloud into rain, finds a parallel in the Brittasanhara by the Vedic god Indra, for Britta is cloud and killing the cloud by Indra's thunder is poetry for the prosaic fact of conversion of cloud into rain by the action of thunder and lightning.

The unfolding of Sri Krishna's divine love and his divinity is shown from his birth till his death. At all stages of his life he is shown detached from worldly connections and attachments. At his birth he is weaned from his parents and grows up and is fostered in a place where he had no blood relations, but loves everybody and everybody loves him, in his youth he weans himself off from the associates and friends of his boyhood and goes to his natural parents, but after endearing himself to the people there and establishing his mighty power, he again gives up all and detaches himself from all and goes to a distant place and founds an empire of love with the princesses of India at Dwarka in the midst of the ocean. In the great fight at Kurukshetra, the material part of his assistance, consisting of his vast army, he gives to the Kurus and only the spiritual part of his assistance goes to the good Pandavas. His nephew Abhimanyu was killed in unfair fight by all the heroes of the Kuru side, but he never breathed a word of curse against the Kurus for that. On the contrary, when Gandhari, to whose sons he had lent the assistance of his whole Narayan Army, wanted to curse him for the destruction of the Kurus, with perfect unconcern for his and his family's welfare, he gladly took upon him the curse of Gandhari. When after all he returns to his kingdom and eventually Gandhari's curse takes effect, he shows no ailings or concern for the destruction of his family and with the noblest unconcern he disappears,

sending Jara, who shot him with his arrow and fell at his feet from earth by his love. The true implication of all this was to show his absolute absence of attachment for worldly matters or material prosperity and his spiritual and divine nature.

It is said that there can be no incarnation of god at all in philosophy. But the Hindu theory of incarnation is only in respect of one of the Hindu Triad Vishnu, who is described as preserver and sustainer between the creator Brahma and the destroyer Shiva. The theory of incarnation is the descent of the Divine Narayana on the earth in a human body to accomplish some object and to show success in a particular sphere whose need was the sorest. It is for this that the title of the Epic is 'Jaya,' or the Book of Success. The conception of incarnation is not really deification. Sri Krishna was not an incarnation but was an emblem of divine love and power. Sri Krishna proved by his great example how disinterested human love can be the stepping stone to divine love. Sri Krishna of the Mahabharata was the charioteer or guide of Arjuna to restore peace and tranquility by removing the reign of blind malice, wickedness and tyranny typified in Duryodhana, Kansa, Sisupala, etc. Sri Krishna was a reformer in the sense of changing the old order of things and establishing the kingdom of disinterested divine love, typified in the reign of Yudhishthira and the destruction of Charvaka, whose easy epicurean theory of life was then prevalent amongst Brahmanas. It is for this it is said that the root of the Mahabharata lies in Krishna, Brahma and Brahmanas. The greatness of Sri Krishna is his godliness, demonstrated in all his actions in the great Epic.

The source and growth of ancient Indo-Aryan society, religion, culture, literature and civilization are vividly reflected in the great Epic and to do this the Pousya, Poulama and Astika Parvas were added by way of introduction by the great Yajnavalkya, as is clearly mentioned in the Pousya Parva. The Anukramanika and Parva Sangraha Chapter as a synopsis or table of contents of the great Epic must have been added at a still later age.

The reputed authors of the Epics, Vyasa and Valmiki, were blackened in the Buddhistic age, by making one the offspring of guilty intercourse and the other a robber. But the mischief failed to efface the grandeur of their noble characters, which had already got a firm hold on the minds of the people. They looked upon them as gods or demigods and no vilification or calumny could detract from their noble characters or dislodge them from the position of esteem and reverence in which they were enshrined. The Indian Epics were degraded by the

Buddhists with a motive during the period of Buddhist ascendancy, but at the time of the Hindu revival Sankaracharya explained the great Epic as a great manual illustrative of the institutes of law, religion, and morality. The sacrifices displayed the beneficent and philanthropic nature of the position of the king, who was shown as gathering money, not for self-aggrandisement or personal pleasures, but for giving it away for the good of the people. It was found that pure gold without alloy could not take high polish and was not fit for preparing ornaments, etc., so the pure Epic was not thought fit to captivate the imagination of the mass and it was therefore subjected to great alterations and dramatic colourings.

The revisers, instead of wholesale casting off of the popular but mischievous additions of the Buddhist age, took great care to denote means for interpreting the real truths to the intelligent at the conclusion at the end of the book. This is perhaps the only explanation of those themes in the Epic which were against the laws and customs of Ancient India. And this would explain the inclusion of Yavana and Buddhist glory in the stories of Arjuna's defeat at the hand of Yavana, Kaur and Savira. The glorification of vegetable offerings in treat of animal offerings at sacrifices, as illustrated in the story of King Upariksha. Basurama's fall for offering animal sacrifice, was the work of the Buddhist age. The exportation of a army and possession of animals as the best of all virtues, as illustrated in the story of King Saka going to heaven for possessing that virtue, also speaks of the Buddhist influence in it. The enigmatic "five Yavana" story of Draupadi speaks the same Buddhist influence of Hecataeus, who lived long after the fall of Alexander over India and amongst the Greeks of the West.

resemblance to one another, and the views put in their mouths and preserved in the Epic can teach the modern world on all important questions of religion, philosophy, theology and love. The Mahabharata will be the lasting memorial of Vyasa till the end of the world, and his great ideal characters seem to be live characters moving even now, inspite of the unreal colouring lent to them by the dramatic revisions and alterations. The lives and characters of the great heroes and heroines of the Indian Epics were the direct outcome of the education they received in their early age and their culture. The Pandavas became sturdy, painstaking, religious through their training in the forest school, while the Kurus grew wicked, irreligious and wily through being brought up amidst the dissipating and voluptuous influences of the school of court life.

Religion proposes to establish the welfare of society by positive regulations and lays down a code for the government of mankind in all the varied walks of life to restrain human passions. Epic illustrations help in great measure to do the important work of regulating society by presenting pictures of human greatness in the great characters of the past in such a manner as will sway the heart of man or woman in every period of civilisation. The Epics build the temple of religion full of majesty, to which the worshippers may approach in the hope of obtaining mercy by penitence and by taking note of the sad end of sinful delights. The Epics by their contrasting characters make an enquiry into the delights and pleasures of human life, into the love of country, home, family, king, preceptor, law, custom, ambitions of life and the glory of god in religion and love. The Epics present pictures of vicious habits against the virtuous conduct of great men, adding new charms to every rational pleasure, refining the taste of mankind in general. Religion augments the enjoyments of taste. Taste depends on the culture of a man or a woman. Religion does not resemble those scenes of natural beauty where every object smiles. Beauty consists in certain peculiar lines, forms, features, colours, complexions, motions, movements, and posings which the eye discovers and appeals to the heart, till it becomes a taste with a man or a woman. Nature and art continually furnish the cultivated mind with the sources of gratification; religion and philosophy confer upon taste the most exquisite enjoyments. The highest enjoyments of taste depend upon the state of mind and culture of heart. Vulgar and refined tastes are as the poles asunder. The different emotions which the same objects present are quite clear. They speak of the influence of teaching, calling and society if not of culture. The highest or lowest enjoyments of taste depend upon the associations of the mind, according to its elevation or depravity.

The fine arts of poetry, painting and music cannot be appreciated by illiterate human beings. The celebrated men were indebted for the establishment of their fame to the nature of their subjects in their productions. Homer and Virgil were carried away by the popular superstition of their days and by means of the established mythology excited interest. Religion unfriendly to innocent gratification, adds new charm to every rational pleasure and refines the taste, while it cultivates the heart which can purify human enjoyments on earth in the midst of which flourishes the tree of immortality which Vyasa conceived.

Religious influence outlives all earthly enjoyments. There is a delight in the very despising of sinful delights to have some spiritual joy. Things lawful in themselves are in their excess sinful and bring bitterness in the end, but spiritual joy ends in eternal bliss and happiness. Vyasa has made a religion of joy. Happiness is inculcated as a duty. The glory of God is reflected in the progress of the soul towards perfection, in the vicissitudes of life to plant a tree of universal love so that suffering humanity may repose beneath its shade and feel the virtue of its healing leaves, so that bleeding nations of malice disappear in the gigantic forms of Drona, Bhishma, Drupad, Duryodhana and Karna, so that all the kindred of the human family are knitted together in one common bond of amity and love and the warrior shall be a character unknown except in the page of history to excite hatred of the world. 'Such fate ambition finds'. The purity of soul of Bhishma, when stained with the contagion of guilt, dies a death of enduring pain on the bed of arrows. The great war of Kurukshetra depicts the pomp and power of the great kings and heroes of India who fell like a structure made of a pack of cards before the silent artillery of divine love in the moral forces of the Pandavas and their allies with the symbol of success in Sri Krishna. The sight of the ocean derives a considerable portion of its interest from the moral reflections which it suggests. It was for this reason the battlefield of Kurukshetra was described as something like a religious crusade.

## APPENDIX A.

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The text of the Mahabharata describes the actual marriage taking place first with Yudhishthira only with the priest Dhaumya officiating. After it a sage reported the marriages, on successive days, with the other Pandavas. Day after day it is described as wonderful for it is hardly believable and is based on nothing but mere hearsay evidence.

"Then that Veda-knowing priest (Dhaumya) kindled the sacred fire and poured the libations of ghee in that blazing fire with proper Mantras. That Mantra-knowing Brahman then called Yudhishthira and united him with Krishna (Draupadi). Walking round the fire (for seven times), the bride and the bridegroom took each other's hands. Thus they were married by the Veda-knowing (Dhaumya). Then taking leave of that ornament of battle (Yudhishthira), he (Dhaumya) went out of the palace. Then those mighty car-warriors, the perpetrators of the Kuru race, those princes, attired in costly robes, took the hand of the best of women (Draupadi) day by day in succession. The celestial sage told me of a very wonderful incident, namely that the high souled lady of slender waist (Draupadi) regained her virginity day after day (That is, every day after her previous marriage)." (Adi Parva, Chapter CC, page 273, verses 11-14.)

The Hindu marriage laws cannot sanction such a marriage as is here reported. If all the Pandavas were married together to Draupadi, all at a time with a priest, then and only then it could be held that Draupadi was married to the Pandavas but not otherwise. The wife of the elder brother is like a mother during his lifetime, and there was nothing in the institutes or customs of Ancient India to legalise such a marriage. It might be the creation of the dramatic revisers of the Mahabharata.

One would have been inclined to believe the alleged rule said to have been established by Narada, if Arjuna was found to have really followed Brahmachariya for twelve years under the said rule and had not married Subhadra and Ulupi during the period in question. What is more, the truthful Yudhishthira did not mention anything about the rule but decided clearly that it was purely a question of propriety and nothing else. The translation of the text speaks for itself —

"Yudhishthira said.—O hero, I know full well why you entered the room and did what you knew would be disagreeable to me. But I have not felt any displeasure with it. The younger brother may enter the room in which his elder brother sits with his wife. There is no fault to be found in this. If the elder brother enters the room where his younger brother is with his wife, then he acts against the rule of propriety. O mighty-armed hero, therefore, desist from your purpose. Do what I say. Your virtue has suffered no diminution and you have not shown any disregard towards me." (Adi Parva, Chapter CCXV, page 289, verses 31-33.)

It is evident that the alleged establishment of a rule that any of the brothers who would see another brother while he was with Draupadi would go to the forest for twelve years to lead the life of Brahmachari is a myth. Arjuna is not found to have followed it. The explanation of Ulupi is not convincing as it does not bear out the facts. Arjuna is said to have refrained from observing Brahmacharya at the command of the elder brother, but it was just the contrary and the exile of any of the brothers to adopt Brahmacharya for twelve years did not relate only to Draupadi. That was not the vow in *Adi Parva*, Chapter CCXIV, verses 27—29. This chapter as well as the preceding chapters are answers to the question of Janmejaya as to why no dissensions arose among brothers when they had so beautiful a wife common to them all. But one cannot overlook that the truthful Yudhishthira mentions in the quotation given above that Draupadi was his wife and not that of the other brothers. The story of Tillottama was told in fact just after Karna's speech exhorting the Kuru prince Duryodhana to fight immediately after the marriage in *Adi Parva*, Chapter CCIV, verses 6 to 21.

The dice play incidents wholly unmasked the question of Draupadi's marriage, and Duryodhana and his friends in the public hall revenged the great exposure of the lac house at the Svayambara ceremony in right royal fashion. Draupadi did not take her stand as the common wife of the Pandavas, and the Pandavas could not challenge the stake of Yudhishthira in Draupadi at the dice play, though called upon to do so by Duryodhana in *Sabha Parva*, Chapter LXX, verses 3—6.

"Draupadi ! let the other brothers of Yudhishthira say that he is a liar and you will be set free."

Yudhishthira, the emblem of honesty and truthfulness, could never have staked Draupadi if she really were the common wife of the Pandavas. That was the great issue of the day when Draupadi was dragged in the public hall of the dice play to be revenged on the fraud of the marriage declaration of Draupadi, at the instance of Krishna perhaps, for Drupada told the Pandavas that they themselves could not think of their welfare so much as Krishna did for them.

The outspoken Bhima expressed his grief that even game-masters who keep public women do not stake them at a game of dice and what his brother did was horrible, and his hand, which staked it, was fit to be burnt. Arjuna warned him not to fulfil the objects of the Kurus, to make them fight among themselves over the matter. The boon, the old blind king Dhritarastra gave to Draupadi will speak for itself. Draupadi did not know that she would be offered a second boon after the first boon was offered. If she were really the common wife of all the Pandavas she

would have asked for the release of the Pandavas in a body with their sons, but it was not so. She only asked for her husband Yudhisthira and her only son by him. In the second boon she asked for the two heroes with their arms, and when a third boon was offered it was refused by her. From the above it is evident that Draupadi was the wife of Yudhisthira alone.

In the question of the marriage of Satyawati Bhisma's connection with the Kurus was exposed and it must be said that Bhisma was a fictitious character, brought to prominence with his father's marriage, while his own birth is wrapped up in mystery with vanishing Ganga. There is a vulgar threat used with bragging even now "I shall show you your father's marriage" (A thing impossible). Bhisma is said to have performed the function of the match-maker of his father and was blessed with the boon of dying at will. Santanu was a mere king and could not be said to possess the power of granting such a boon, which can only be the gift of the Divine God. Bhisma seems to have monopolised the function of match making, not only of his father but of all his descendants to the time of Pandu.

It will be interesting to discuss here, from the texts of the Mahabharata the truth of such marriages. Bhisma contracted the marriage of his brother Bichitravirya with the daughter of the king of Benares. But the internal evidence found in the Mahabharata makes one doubt this. The mother of Pandu is mentioned to be Kausalya, the princess of Kosala and not that of Benares in *Adi Parva*, Chapter CXXVI, and again in the next chapter, verse 24. Another marriage in which Bhisma had a hand is found to be Madri's marriage to Pandu. Madri is said to be the cause of Pandu's death, like Kekayi in the Ramayana of Dasaratha's death. Madri is said to have burnt in the funeral pyre of her husband. If that was the custom then prevalent, then all the wives of the great heroes of Kurukshetra or some of them at least would have been mentioned as having mounted the funeral pyres of their husbands, but there was no such mention in the separate Parvas of the Mahabharata.

Besides, the illustrious Pandu's death as reported by the sages in *Adi Parva*, (Chapter CXXVI) speaks of Pandu having one wife. The sages held a consultation amongst themselves on the death of Pandu and decided to pass a resolution that.

"The high souled and illustrious Pandu, abandoning his sovereignty and kingdom, came here to practise asceticism and received their protection. Now that he has gone to heaven it is our bounden duty to go to the kingdom with his survivors, his wife and infant sons, left in our care with his dead body so that the last rites shall be performed."



This was acted upon accordingly and they took the sons of Pandu and his wife with the dead body and made a report of the death of Pandu in the Kuru Court. The last rites of Pandu were performed in the court with due ceremony. In these circumstances it is incomprehensible that the funeral ceremony in which Madri ascended the funeral pyre of her husband should be described as having been performed in the previous chapter. There was no question put by anybody to recite in full detail the account of Pandu's death and his funeral. Besides, the cause of the death of Pandu, as disclosed by the sages has no reference to the curse of Madri's connection with Pandu. The ground given out by Madri for mounting the funeral pyre in verse 28, *Adi Parva*, Chapter CXXV, is not in accordance with *Sati* rites and this apparent anachronism cannot but be an instance of the worst kind of interpolation. It has been shown that the five Pandavas are the five forms of Indra, and Nakul and Sahadeb could not be the sons of Madri by *Asvini-kumars*. The portions which deal with this must naturally be also interpolations. All marriages with which *Bhisma* was connected seem to be mere fictions. Such kind of interpolations are not rare in the *Mahabharata*.

The story of *Draupadi's* clothes being drawn away from her body in order to make her naked in the assembly hall and the great God *Krishna* protecting her from being disgraced in that way is also an interpolation of the worst kind to inculcate the merit, virtue, and effect of *Krishna* worship. It was far from the fact. The wailing of *Draupadi*, the actual sufferer, before *Krishna* did not mention it in *Bana Parva*, nor did her mother-in-law *Kunti* speak of it in her wailing before *Krishna* in *Udyoga Parva*, nor did *Krishna* himself describe it in the *Kuru Court* in his great mission of peace when recounting the wrongs of the *Kurus* and their persecutions.

*Draupadi* bestowed her benediction on *Arjuna* for his success when he was starting out to excell those great reputed warriors his adversaries could command. If *Arjuna* was really one of the husbands of *Draupadi* she could not bless him in the way she did in Chapter XXXVII, *Bana Parva*, verses 31—34.

"O Kaunteya our kingdom and prosperity, weal or woe are all in your hands. I give you my *ashirbad* (blessing) and wish you godspeed. Let success attend you for you always worship your elder brother and obey his commands."

The cause of the blessing makes the position of *Draupadi* clear as well as the blessing itself. Besides, if *Draupadi* was the wife of *Arjuna*, *Kunti* would not have sent a message to *Arjuna* through *Krishna* before the war, Chapter CXXXVII, *Udyoga Parva*, verse 20 —

"Tell *Arjuna*, that foremost of heroes, to follow whatever *Draupadi* would request him to do."

Bhima, after killing Kichaka in Birata Parva, Chapter XXII, verse 79, exclaimed

"I am now absolved from the *debt of my brother* I owed and am now in peace"

Kichaka being killed for insulting Draupadī "debt of my brother" would not have been said if Draupadī was the wife of Bhima as well

There is another incident mentioned in the Epic which gives clear proof that none but Yudhishthira was the husband of Draupadī. In the Bana Parva, Chapter CXLIV, when Draupadī felt tired with fatigue from walking, Nakul cried out for help to his elder brother Yudhishthira, who took her up in his lap and Nakul and Sahadeb began to knead her feet. Bhima volunteered to carry her and his brothers on his shoulder, but it was at last Bhima's son Ghotatkacha who was requisitioned for the purpose. Certainly if Nakul and Sahadeb were really married to Draupadī they would not press the feet of Draupadī nor would she allow them to do so. When Nakul cried out for help Bhima, instead of Yudhishthira, would have rendered the first help himself by placing her in his lap being the strongest of all. But Nakul specially asks Yudhishthira to comfort her. Yudhishthira would not have questioned Bhima as to who would carry her if Draupadī were a common wife to all and Bhima's son would not have had to do so. What could be better proof than this that she was really not the wife of all the brothers, but of Yudhishthira alone?

In Bana Parva Krishna solaced Draupadī with the assurance that she would be the queen —

"If the heaven falls, the Himalaya splits, Earth rends, Ocean dries up but my words will not be false. O Draupadī thou shalt be the queen and see the wives of those who incurred your displeasure weeping in the battlefield seeing the mutilated dead bodies of their husbands. Do not grieve, I shall do all in my power to help the Pandavas. Rest assured of it."

Here lies the difference between Sita and Draupadī in the Epics. Draupadī was not meant to destroy Durjodhana, his brothers and family like Ravana, but she wanted to reign and rule the kingdom with her husband. Sita was exiled to satisfy the subjects of the empire so that the king might not be accused of setting a bad example to his subjects. The report of Draupadī's marriage with the five Pandavas was circulated only to avert a cruel war immediately after the marriage, to which Karna the evil genius of the Kuru court clearly wanted to incite the young Durjodhana. †

\* Chapter XII, verses 129—131

† Adi Parva, Chapter CCIV, verses 6—21

There were discussions between Draupadi and Yudhishthira in Bana Parva and after the battle was won when Yudhishthira expressed his unwillingness to ascend the throne due to the cruel massacre of his near and dear relatives and friends on the battlefield, but there was no such conversation between Draupadi and any other Pandava in the whole Mahabharata, except her calling upon Bhima to despatch Kichaka from this world. Bhima has been shown there to have exclaimed as having repaid the debt of his brother. Draupadi's admonition, home-thrusts and hints to strike the conscience of her husband are significant. She told him very sarcastically that she would have suffered for nothing the miseries and calumny of having five husbands as five senses of the body if she could not after all ascend the throne as a queen. She reminded the husband of the assurance of his mother about it. 'But alas! it would have been far better if she had been known to be the wife of one before the world, if you intend not reigning over the kingdom you won after such a struggle'. \*

Draupadi and the Pandavas were born for the express purpose of establishing the kingdom of righteousness. Drupad's sons and daughter were the off-shoots of sacrifice and the births of the three Pandavas were the outcome of Pandu's severe penances in the forest before his death. When Yudhishthira † and Arjuna ‡ were born the voices of heaven were heard and the objects of their births were declared. This was given out in the Mahabharata. But nothing could be found about Bhima, Nakul and Sahadeba, who played no important parts in the Epic worthy of heroes. They too were afterthoughts and creations of a later age, with their mother Madri, when the *sati* rite came into vogue.

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\* Shanti Parva, Chapter XIV, verses 27—29.

† Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXV, verses 22 and 23.

‡ Udyoga Parva, Chapter XC, verses 65 and 66.

## APPENDIX B.

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Professor Lassen, in his 'Indische Alterthumskunde' (II, 499, new edition), considers that it may be proved from an examination of the Introduction to the Mahabharata that there were three consecutive workings-up (bearbeitung) of that poem by different authors. The first or oldest version, called simply Bharata, which contained only 24000 verses, began with the history of Manu, the progenitor of the Kshatriya or military class (Adiparvan 3126), and a short section—describing the pedigree of Vyasa, and how he appeared at the Snake-sacrifice, and how, at the request of Janmejaya he commissioned Vaisampayana to relate the story of the strife between the Pandavas and Kauravas (I, 2208, etc)—might have formed the introduction (einleitung) to this oldest Bharata. The second reconstruction or recasting of the poem—thought by Professor Lassen to be identical with the Itihasa mentioned in Asvalayana's Grihyasutras, and recited at Saunaka's Horse-sacrifice—took place about 400 B C. It began with the history of king Vasu, whose daughter Satyavati was mother of Vyasa, and the section called Paushya (I, 661), the antiquity of which is indicated by its being almost entirely in prose, might have served as its introduction. The section called Pauloma (I, 851) probably formed the commencement of the third reconstruction of the great Epic, which he considers must have preceded the era of Asoka.

The following passage from the Vedārtha-prasaśa of Madhava Acarya (who lived in the fourteenth century) commenting on the Taittiriya Yajurveda (p 1), translated by Dr Muir in his Sanskrit Texts, volume III, page 47, attributes the actual composition of the Mahabharata to the sage Vyasa, and gives a remarkable reason for his having written it.—

'It may be said that all persons whatever, including women and Sudras, must be competent students of the Veda, since the aspiration after good (ishtaṃ me syad ita) and the deprecation of evil are common to all mankind. But it is not so. For though the expedient exists, and women and Sudras are desirous to know it, they are debarred by another cause from being competent students of the Veda. The scripture (śāstra) which declares that those persons only who have been invested with the sacrificial cord are competent to read the Veda, intimates thereby that the same study would be a cause of unhappiness to women and Sudras (who are not so invested). How then are these two classes of persons to discover the means of future happiness? We answer, from the Puranas and other such works. Hence it has been said. Since the triple Veda may not be heard by women, Sudras, and degraded twice-born men, the Mahabharata (Bharatam akhyaṇam) was, in his benevolence, composed (Kṛitam) by the Munī.'

## APPENDIX C

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Quotations from the correspondence of Dr V S Sukthankar, M A., Ph D , Editor of the Critical Edition of the Great Epic of India with the author of this book

'In the versions so far consulted the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas takes place not simultaneously but one after another

' The distinct definitions of the prostitutes with four or five husbands (mentioned by Kuntī in Adiparvan Adhyaya 123) are found in all versions

' Many conjectures have been made to identify the three beginnings of The Mahabharata Your conjecture is certainly worth considering I am glad to know your explanation of the stanza

' Your views are so interesting, and your study of the Mahabharata is evidently so profound that you ought to write a book stating your views and giving the world of scholars the benefit of your erudition I hope you will fully state in your book why and how you disagree with the views of Western scholars Such a book is urgently needed and will be keenly appreciated, at least in India, if not all over the world '



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# TOPOGRAPHICAL INDEX

- Achabal—233  
 Africa—107  
 Ahichhatra—522  
 Allahabad—263, 280, 284, 306, 339  
 Ambar—383  
 America—107  
 Anga—129, 249, 256, 271, 278, 279, 371, 376  
 Angadiya—277  
 Arak—299  
 Arayalaya—260  
 Aryabarta—70, 117, 255, 283, 290, 565  
 Asia—107  
 Assam—304  
 Assyria—70, 110  
 Attica—90  
 Australia—91  
 Ayodhya—279, 298, 301, 371, 375, 401, 403, 423, 425, 464  
 Ayodhya-Videha—376  
 Azemgar—293
- Babul—291  
 Babylon—267  
 Babylonia—90  
 Backergunge—260  
 Badarikasrama—286, 295 6, 352, 365, 503  
 Badhusara—14, 50  
 Bagdad—293  
 Bahulpur—295.  
 Baidesha—371  
 Baidyanath—260  
 Baikunthapur—298  
 Baitarani—280, 302 3  
 Balhika—71  
 Banga—255 6, 271, 370, 376  
 Basnagar—542  
 Bawan—283  
 Behar—94, 290, 293, 296-7, 299, 528  
 Bonares—263, 275, 278, 286, 288, 293, 296, 369 388, 390, 441, 475, 505, 529 518, 576  
 Bengal—94-5, 129, 250, 255, 259, 270 1, 230, 231 5, 290-1, 293-97, 301-03, 306, 348, 365, 368-9, 376, 395, 523-30  
 Bhagalpur—296, 304  
 Bhagirathi—164, 236, 274, 359  
 Bharatvarsa—353  
 Bhotan—263, 293  
 Bhubaneswar—305  
 Bilaspur—295  
 Bombay—296  
 Brahmana—293  
 Brahmaputra—255 6, 260, 293, 413  
 Brahmaputra—279, 282 3, 365.
- Brindaban—311, 315-17, 324, 333, 416, 482-3, 486-7, 490-92, 494, 497 8 503, 506  
 Buddha-Gaya—299  
 Burdwan—295  
 Burma—297  
 Buxar—295
- Calcutta—295  
 Candracaka—277  
 Cawnpore—295  
 Ceylon—153, 259-G1 297, 304, 307, 332, 347, 414, 545, 553  
 Champa—290  
 China—288, 394, 529  
 Chitor—386  
 Chittagong—260  
 Chota Nagpur—256, 303  
 Colombo—261  
 Coorg—304, 531  
 Coromandel—261
- Dandakaranya—359  
 Darjeeling—304  
 Deccan—279, 390, 505  
 Delhi—294, 497, 541, 548  
 Dhawala-giri—260  
 Dinajpur—263, 293  
 Dondra-head—262  
 Dravid—304, 509  
 Dwarka—316, 329, 333, 366, 486, 503, 506, 543, 569
- Egypt—9, 90, 110, 267 8  
 Ellore—529  
 Europe—107
- Gandhar—277, 289, 395, 590  
 Ganga—14, 63, 73, 126, 164, 229, 239 40, 242, 262, 291, 318, 359, 400, 440, 676  
 Ganges—69, 95, 112, 131, 140, 186, 203, 233, 240, 254, 256, 260, 280, 283-85, 290, 298, 302, 304, 366, 398, 448, 543  
 Gaya—263, 273, 280, 300, 306, 375, 529  
 Gazni—141  
 Germany—263  
 Giribraja—299, 360  
 Giridiwa—261  
 Godavari—69  
 Gour—259, 271, 395, 530  
 Grace—9, 73, 90, 111, 246, 417, 450  
 Gridrakuta—400  
 Gunduck—260  
 Gurjara—529  
 Guzerata—277  
 Guzrat—271, 393
- Haridwar—296  
 Hastinapur—350, 472, 522  
 Himachil—262  
 Himalayas—116, 166 170, 175, 192, 262, 277, 283, 295-6, 304, 352, 365, 411, 464, 470, 497, 501, 518, 578  
 Hooghly—297  
 Hrisikesha—487
- Illabarta—70, 376  
 India—70, 77, 79, 84, 89, 97, 103, 107 8, 112, 115, 117 8, 131, 168-9, 185, 189, 211, 214, 216-7, 228, 240, 255, 257, 260, 266, 269 9, 271, 273, 276 7, 279-81, 283-4, 287, 289, 295 6, 301-2, 306, 316, 317, 323, 326, 331-2, 334 5, 337, 351, 353, 368, 370, 378, 385, 389, 392, 394, 397-99, 406, 409, 410-13, 416, 418, 425, 430, 433, 440, 445, 447, 452 3, 457, 459-60, 463-4, 471, 473, 477, 479-81, 491, 493 4, 497-8, 500, 503-06, 510, 520-22, 524, 527-30, 532, 534, 536, 542 3, 545 6, 548, 552-3, 557 8, 560, 561-66, 569, 571, 573, 581  
 Indraprastha—295, 329, 358, 431  
 Indus—268 9, 294  
 Islamabad—288
- Jahnabi—164  
 Jaipur—390, 503  
 Jambu Dwipa—261, 299  
 Jamuna—69, 112, 140, 255, 283 4, 291, 313, 317, 457, 487  
 Janakpura—293  
 Jeypur—339  
 Jhansi—295  
 Jhelum—294  
 Jodhpur—337  
 Jubbinpore—296.
- Kaci—445  
 Kadesh—110  
 Kahalgau—290  
 Kailas—262  
 Kalighat—302  
 Kalinga—256, 271, 276, 293, 297, 302, 306-7, 370  
 Kalinga Baitarani—302  
 Kalmashi—518  
 Kamaksha—376  
 Kamrupa—263, 297-8  
 Kanauj—271, 395, 530

- Kanyakubja—277  
 Kapilavastu—238  
 Karapatha-desa—277  
 Karewa—288  
 Karnagarh—296, 304  
 Karnal—294  
 Kashmir—264, 283-9, 291, 296,  
     293, 393, 395, 501, 530  
 Kasinagar—288  
 Kaveri—69  
 Khandaba—294, 296, 433  
 Kohistan—263  
 Kosala—276, 301 576  
 Kurukshetra—207, 227, 236,  
     248, 257, 271, 282-3, 286,  
     292, 310, 315 6, 322, 332,  
     339, 378, 385, 403, 404, 427-8,  
     433, 435, 439-40, 449, 473,  
     486, 493, 499 503, 513, 523,  
     542-3, 545, 564-5, 567—69,  
     573, 576  
 Kusabati—371  
 Kusasthali—277  
  
 Lanka—315  
 Larkhana—263-9  
 Lassa—263  
  
 Madhyadesa—401  
 Magadha—293, 297, 363, 413,  
     444  
 Mahauli—298  
 Mahabalipuram—261  
 Mahavilly Gunga—261  
 Mahendra—401, 487  
 Malwah—261  
 Mandar—259, 259-90, 301  
 Manikpur—295  
 Martand—238  
 Mathura—262, 277, 280, 284,  
     324, 371, 482, 497, 506  
 Mayurbhanja State—307  
 Memari—295  
 Mesopotamia—110, 263  
 Midnapore—296, 304  
 Mithila—130, 271, 369, 375,  
     413, 444  
 Mokameh Ghat—296, 304  
 Monghyr—293  
 Mongolia—303  
 Musri—110  
  
 Nalanda—209-10  
 Navadvipa—296  
 Neel Ganga—262  
 Nepaul—263, 304, 393  
 Nile—90  
  
 Oojein—261  
 Orissa—94, 280, 291, 293, 297,  
     301, 303, 401, 509  
 Oudh—261, 401, 541, 548  
  
 Panchala—95, 247, 371, 350,  
     375, 521—23  
 Pandrathan—238  
 Patan—295  
 Patharghatta—290  
 Patna—260, 298  
 Phatuha—298  
 Phigalia—90  
 Philippine—396  
 Portugal—388  
 Pratisthan—71-2, 133, 301,  
     347, 376, 563  
 Prayaga—140, 284, 301  
 Pundra—256, 371, 509  
 Punjab—259 263, 270, 276,  
     279 80, 284, 294  
 Puri—302, 304-5, 394, 504,  
     506  
 Purneah—260, 298  
 Pushkaravati—277  
  
 Rabnabad—260  
 Raghapur—304  
 Rajasthan—386  
 Rajputana—386-7  
 Rajshahy—260  
 Ramagiri—277  
 Ramnagore—475  
 Rameswar—295  
 Rautasgar—300  
 Ravana's Hrad—262  
 Rawal Pindi—294  
 Rome—9, 111, 246, 501  
 Rowkela—295  
 Rungpur—263  
 Russia—107  
  
 Sakadvipa—299  
 Sakshigopal—305  
 Sambakhyagram—299  
  
 Samkhya—295  
 Saptagrama—255, 368  
 Satgaon—259  
 Saugor—260, 263  
 Scandinavia—263  
 Semaria Ghat—304  
 Setu-Bandha Rameshara—503  
 Sbahebgunge—260  
 Shumushpur Jafurabad—293  
 Siam—307  
 Sikim—304  
 Simhapura—297  
 Sind—69, 198, 263, 291  
 Singhapur—261  
 Singheswara—304  
 Singur—297  
 Sita Kuuda—260, 296  
 Sittiyacca—261  
 Srabasti—371  
 Sribatsa—71, 141  
 Srigeswar—304  
 Srikanta—71, 141  
 Srinagar—238, 293  
 Suhmha—256, 371  
 Sutlege—262  
 Sundeep—260  
  
 Takashasila—209, 294-5  
 Tamluk—270  
 Tanjore—307  
 Taxilla—277, 294  
 Thamasa—167  
 Thaneswar—141  
 Tibet—262-3, 299, 393 531,  
     541  
 Tirhoot—260  
 Tribeni—255, 284  
 Troy—315, 323, 332  
  
 Ulwar—349  
 Undes—262  
 Utkal—375  
  
 Vaijayanta—347  
 Vaisali—376  
 Vamani—260  
 Vikramshila—209  
 Vaidhya—277, 283, 411  
 Vizagapatam—306

# INDEX.

Abdel Kader—12  
 Abdul Wasī—387  
 Abhimanyu—201, 233, 297,  
 493, 494 5, 502, 597, 542,  
 551, 593  
 Abhiras—503  
 Abul Fazal—239, 301, 335 6,  
 333  
 Achyuta—437  
 Adam—454, 483 9  
 Adam's Bridge—262  
 Adharyu—64, 120, 195, 375  
 Adhyatma—96, 224  
 Adhyatma Ramayana—332  
 Adikesava—29, 475, 595  
 Aditi—117, 126, 123, 337, 462  
 Aditya—83, 217, 451, 462, 466  
 Agamas—214  
 Agni—25, 26, 83, 100, 114, 123,  
 126 7, 133, 145, 169 216,  
 213, 222, 362 401, 422, 434—30,  
 451, 465—67  
 Agnihotra—93  
 Agriculture—63, 107, 132, 151,  
 163, 183  
 Agyasta—11, 24, 39, 72, 84,  
 83, 103—03, 115—17, 122,  
 124—5, 143, 137, 158,  
 166—63, 210, 213, 225—6,  
 240, 260, 403, 413, 417, 422,  
 472, 560—62, 564 5  
 Ahalya—93, 115 6, 201 2,  
 204, 365, 397, 451, 517, 563  
 Ahirs—571  
 Aila—273, 568  
 Ailies—66  
 Aila Gita—448  
 Aila Pururaba—63, 409  
 Ailavila (Dilpa II) 274.  
 Aitareya—343  
 Aja—204  
 Ajamedha—66, 382.  
 Ajatsatru—149, 331, 440,  
 444 5  
 Ajigarta—464.  
 Ajita—345  
 Akbar—25, 325—90  
 Akhyana—349  
 Akshamala—425  
 Alamkaravati—294  
 Alexander—43, 71, 87, 259,  
 270, 289, 293 4, 334, 532  
 Algebra—124, 292  
 Amar—200  
 Amba—115, 237, 423, 443, 451  
 Ambalika—77, 423  
 Ambika—77  
 Ambarisa—301, 345  
 Ambirasa—273  
 Amishtub—461  
 Amitabha—531

Amogha—443  
 Amurtarajasa—273  
 Ananga—379  
 Ananta—125  
 Anava—273  
 Andhaka—52, 277, 293  
 Andhra—505  
 Anga—204, 375  
 Angas—112  
 Angada—277  
 Angira—71—2, 129 132, 139  
 184, 219, 272 392, 463—66, 507  
 Angurasa—14, 93, 112, 120, 130,  
 200, 350, 464, 467  
 Anna—Purna—105  
 Ansuman—69  
 Antiochus II—71  
 Anu—14  
 Anugita—202  
 Anuha—276, 375  
 Anukramanika—146, 224, 415,  
 541  
 Anukramani—124, 333, 392  
 Apam—267  
 Apantaratama—19, 29, 104,  
 155, 194, 193, 347, 351, 459  
 Apaya—133  
 Apanavana—134  
 Apsaras—127, 133, 211, 395,  
 530  
 Aptas—217  
 Araji—241, 359  
 Aramati—267  
 Aranyakas—102, 265, 353, 431,  
 463, 469  
 Aranyaka Veda—346  
 Arayalaya—230  
 Aristotle 306  
 Arithmetic—292  
 Arjuna—3, 40, 43, 76—7, 94,  
 114, 143, 162 3, 192, 201,  
 203, 215, 227—31, 235, 243,  
 246 7 263 295, 297, 300,  
 311—17 322, 326, 337 339,  
 340, 347, 355—6, 353, 384,  
 394, 399, 401, 404, 408, 411,  
 413, 416, 419, 427 8, 433,  
 439 40, 453, 455, 471, 484,  
 486, 490, 493, 495 6, 491,  
 502, 509, 512—3, 529 332 4,  
 536—7, 541, 543 4, 549 50,  
 556, 558, 566—71, 574—5, 577  
 579  
 Arkadanta—227  
 Arstizena—204—05  
 Artha—181, 192, 320, 379  
 Artabacastra—367  
 Arundhati—42, 112, 447—8,  
 452  
 Aruni—101, 165  
 Aruna Upavesi—291.

Aruna Vaitahavya—351  
 Arusi—134  
 Arrans—97, 102, 106 7, 131,  
 135, 140, 147, 162 167 8,  
 170, 195, 205 6, 218, 253,  
 259 263, 291  
 Aryas—236 7, 304, 423  
 Asamanjas—69, 360  
 Asita—43, 75, 278, 343, 518  
 Asita Devata—112, 348, 353,  
 567  
 Asmaki—276  
 Asoka—290 303, 377, 393, 580  
 Astaka—66  
 Astika—26, 53, 166—68, 201,  
 215, 559 565 567  
 Astrology—106, 123  
 Astronomy—106, 123, 292  
 Asuras—94—95, 101, 106—7,  
 110, 113, 119, 123, 125,  
 127, 132, 134, 139, 157 8,  
 167, 169, 187, 225, 251, 254,  
 267, 289, 301, 304, 303, 319,  
 324—5, 342, 355, 395, 405,  
 450, 464, 469, 471, 500, 530,  
 553, 565  
 Asvaliyana—128, 335, 341,  
 351, 392, 474 5, 580  
 Asvalayana Grhyasutra—339  
 Asvamedha—65—67, 69, 107,  
 181, 194 219, 285, 354 5, 439,  
 433, 475, 531, 515  
 Asvapati Kaikeya—200  
 Asvatha—204  
 Asvathama—403 494, 502,  
 514, 520, 522, 544, 543, 554  
 Asvina—101, 110, 112, 134,  
 218, 281, 437, 446, 462, 466,  
 565, 577  
 Atharva—139, 184  
 Atharvanikas—95  
 Atharva Veda—48, 120, 125,  
 123, 130 1, 137, 166, 208,  
 219, 223, 265 271—2, 239,  
 398, 339, 352, 334, 422—3,  
 459  
 Atithugva Divodasa—204  
 Ativala—379  
 Atreya Samati—250  
 Atri—47, 53 9, 72, 76, 93, 107,  
 115, 132, 301, 463, 466, 517,  
 547, 567  
 Atri Samhita—207  
 Augustus—97  
 Aukshauhina—229  
 Aurangzeb—300  
 Aurva—134, 383, 400 1  
 Autikana—71  
 Avatars—256, 402—3  
 Avalokitesvara—531, 542  
 Avesta—267—8

- Ayana—313  
 Ayasa—464  
 Ayodhadhaumya—22, 35, 71,  
 93, 101, 125, 133, 199, 200 1,  
 Ayu—71, 375  
 Ayurveda—292, 303  
 Ayusha—423—25
- Babar—387  
 Babrubahana—404  
 Badarayana Vyasa—108, 296,  
 350—52, 460, 475  
 Badhanlas—204  
 Baduni—336-7  
 Baibavata Manu—13, 159,  
 547  
 Bairamkhan—384 5  
 Baka—356, 482, 556  
 Balakhilya—59, 166  
 Balaki—149  
 Balaki Gargya—445  
 Balarama—156, 168, 184-5,  
 230, 259, 277, 298, 302, 305,  
 325, 328, 394, 433, 471, 482,  
 492, 499, 503—06, 510, 529,  
 560  
 Bali—13, 39, 48, 94, 130, 133,  
 159, 163, 235, 237, 256, 261-2,  
 329, 371, 374, 393, 405, 523,  
 543, 553  
 Bamadeva—194-5  
 Bamana—43, 168, 185, 375,  
 398  
 Bana—71, 363  
 Banasur—293  
 Bandinash—363  
 Baudya—232  
 Baraha—185  
 Baranabata—482  
 Barun—67, 72, 83, 95, 167, 185,  
 199, 216-7, 266,  
 Bashkala—392  
 Basumanah—66  
 Basuhoma—64-5, 413  
 Basuki—96, 189  
 Basus—240  
 Batapi—125, 167, 226, 360,  
 405  
 Bedabati—137, 445  
 Beni Samhara—395  
 Bhava—75  
 Bhababhuti—376, 394, 418, 476  
 Bhadrakali—74, 280  
 Bhagbata—193-4, 237, 313, 365  
 Bhagbata Gita—502, 569  
 Bhagabata Purana—365  
 Bhagadatta—297  
 Bhagiratha—63 9, 95, 140,  
 163, 203, 257, 273, 280, 286,  
 302, 345, 359, 393, 563  
 Bhagwan Das—386-7  
 Bhalanda—232  
 Bharadwaja—15, 44, 76, 93,  
 115, 124, 137, 204, 272, 274,  
 273, 282, 355, 360, 392, 463,  
 472, 552, 560.  
 Bharadvaja Agnivaras—250  
 Bharata—44, 67, 70-1, 81,  
 108, 133, 149, 161, 205, 209,  
 230-1, 233, 237, 243, 250 1,  
 261, 263—65, 271, 273,  
 276—78, 280, 294, 298, 301-2,  
 313, 339, 345—47, 351, 358,  
 360, 363-7, 371, 378, 392,  
 399, 406-7, 435, 502, 518,  
 549, 560  
 Bharata Samhita—15, 93-7,  
 100, 102, 104, 112, 114, 116-7,  
 120, 122, 133, 138, 141-2,  
 144—47, 149, 151-52, 155,  
 157-8, 160, 163, 166, 169,  
 171-2, 175, 178, 180 1, 185 6,  
 188, 191—93, 196—98, 201-2,  
 204, 205—17, 219, 223—26,  
 239, 251, 253, 264 5, 272-3,  
 275, 285, 303, 312 3, 340,  
 352-3, 360, 373, 380, 396, 405,  
 413, 448, 463-4, 471, 473, 475,  
 546, 553—60, 564, 566-7  
 Bharat Samiti—142, 191  
 Bharati—113, 394  
 Bharati Katha—472  
 Bharavi—376  
 Bhargava—75, 93, 132, 134,  
 138, 204-5, 215, 240, 319, 401,  
 475  
 Bargavas—400 1  
 Bhattanarayana—395, 530  
 Bhubhandaka—271  
 Bhima 43, 52, 68, 114, 136,  
 187, 192, 215, 228—30, 235,  
 239, 243, 258, 263, 277, 297,  
 300, 314 5, 317, 326, 347,  
 356, 367, 384, 411, 419, 433,  
 435—37, 439-40, 447, 455,  
 471, 502, 508, 513-4, 518,  
 520, 534, 536-7, 541, 543,  
 549, 556-7, 568, 575, 578-9  
 Bhinmal—529.  
 Bhiru—132  
 Bhisma—24, 30, 40, 66, 72 3,  
 75-6, 113—15, 136, 163, 196,  
 203, 221-2, 228—30, 232,  
 234—43, 246-7, 263, 343,  
 346, 349, 355 6, 372 3,  
 373—81, 383, 392, 401 404-5,  
 409, 411, 413—15, 423, 448,  
 454, 463, 499, 502, 513 4,  
 522, 541, 543-4, 546, 554,  
 556, 560-1, 564 5, 567, 573,  
 576 7  
 Bhrgu—11—13, 35, 39, 43,  
 93, 103, 116, 118-9, 124,  
 133 4, 139, 147, 154, 163,  
 180, 184, 188, 210, 213, 219,  
 225 6, 236, 240 1, 273, 273,  
 282-3, 325, 337, 350, 355 6,  
 360, 369, 391-2, 393—400,  
 402, 405, 463—67, 472, 518,  
 546, 553, 560—63, 565  
 Bhumaanyu—273  
 Bhuridyumna—359  
 Bhurisarava Salya—514  
 Bibhabasa—215, 370-1  
 Bibhishan—134, 136, 230, 502,  
 549-50  
 Bible—177, 190, 324, 377  
 Bichitravirya—77, 253, 313,  
 339, 423, 443  
 Bidagdha—184  
 Bidhata—91  
 Bidharva—134, 276  
 Bidula—235  
 Bidura—43, 54, 147, 230, 232,  
 237, 240, 243, 253, 314, 347 8,  
 356, 404, 414, 496, 499, 502,  
 515—18, 546, 549 50  
 Bijoy Sinha—259  
 Bimada—463  
 Binata—116-7, 182, 215 6  
 Bipul—417  
 Birata—247, 348, 356, 373, 502,  
 548  
 Birbal—339  
 Biswa Deva—184  
 Black Yajus—391, 547 8  
 Bodo—304  
 Bopadeba—365  
 Brahma—10—13, 20, 31, 33 4,  
 50, 52, 93-9, 104 5, 113,  
 118, 120, 125, 128, 142—44,  
 147, 153, 157, 160—62, 172,  
 183—85, 194, 210, 213, 224,  
 228, 233, 243, 251, 278, 283,  
 307, 314, 318 9, 342, 344,  
 347, 369, 372, 379 80, 445,  
 448, 465, 469, 476, 505, 526,  
 567, 570  
 Brahmadarshana—465  
 Brahmadattas—370, 375  
 Brahmadikas—301  
 Brahma Sutra—352, 459 60  
 Brahma Yaha—391  
 Brahma Vidya—48  
 Brahmana—99, 102, 106, 113-4,  
 134 35, 219—21, 243, 250,  
 321, 342, 345, 353, 364, 370,  
 379, 399, 409, 426, 465—67,  
 475, 566  
 Brahmanas—224, 240, 274,  
 276, 279—82, 291, 293, 299,  
 301, 314, 319-20, 336—39,  
 347-8, 359 60, 363 3, 377-8,  
 399, 401, 405, 408—10,  
 423, 425, 432-3, 437, 449, 479,  
 487, 524, 561, 565, 570  
 Brahmandatta—273  
 Brahmin—179, 193, 200, 214,  
 296, 349, 383, 423, 431, 444  
 Brhadratha—273  
 Brihadaranyaka Upanishad—  
 184, 265, 445  
 Brihadasava—202  
 Brihadratha—131, 204, 300  
 Brihaspati—15, 33, 93, 107,  
 113, 120-1, 126, 128, 137,  
 150, 187, 193, 236, 278, 303,  
 350-1, 360, 379, 409, 417,  
 463, 465, 467, 533, 553, 565  
 Brihatakathamajuri—394  
 Brisha—229  
 Brishavadbhavajya—563  
 Britra—48, 139 40, 151, 340  
 Britta—67, 117, 136, 167, 187 8,  
 197, 225, 251, 308, 373, 466,  
 463 3, 465, 468, 473, 563,  
 569  
 Brittasanhar—569



- Faizi—385-6, 388  
 Firistha—296, 394,  
 Flagu—437  
  
 Gadhi—108, 273, 277, 399  
 Galava—48, 115, 187, 194, 396,  
 410  
 Ganaka—124  
 Gandhabati—8, 346  
 Gandhamadana—215, 399  
 Gandhara Bisala—276  
 Gandharas—142, 233, 289  
 Gandhari—230-33, 243, 248,  
 264, 314, 316, 317, 393, 404,  
 411, 445, 484, 486, 499, 507,  
 541, 546, 551, 569  
 Gandharva—267, 293, 395,  
 422, 434  
 Gandharvas—106-7, 135, 182,  
 237, 263-4, 293, 348, 530, 555  
 Gandharva Vishwayasu—354  
 Ganesha—71, 105, 147, 251,  
 263, 461  
 Gangaya—239  
 Garga—59, 71, 115, 149, 204  
 Gargi—143 9, 453  
 Garuda—12, 85, 93, 105,  
 116-7, 121, 165, 183, 215,  
 217, 299  
 Garuriga—304  
 Gathas—118  
 Gatha Narasama—339  
 Gauda—529  
 Gauda Abhinanda—153  
 Gauras—306  
 Gautama—20, 23, 53-9, 93,  
 95, 106, 115-17, 119, 123,  
 131, 199-22, 292, 306, 347,  
 351, 360, 397, 400, 522, 547  
 Gaya (King)—66, 345, 375  
 Gayasura—230  
 Gayatri—173, 221-2, 461  
 Ghatatkacha—68, 578  
 Ghora Angirasa—546  
 Gita—113, 118, 159, 223, 246,  
 348, 350, 378, 384, 480, 490,  
 493, 500-2, 554, 566, 563  
 Goalas—306  
 Gobinda—113, 246, 487, 529  
 Gojendra Moksham—166, 188  
 Gola—308  
 Gopal—506, 529  
 Gopati—400  
 Gotra—69, 71, 89, 93, 117, 124,  
 148, 204-5, 249, 264 5, 271,  
 351, 417, 463-4  
 Gourangya—293  
 Gouri—505  
 Govardhana—437  
 Goya—332  
 Greeks—226, 246, 248, 266,  
 293, 334, 542  
 Grihya Sutra—265, 341, 370,  
 580  
 Gritsamada—124, 392, 355 6  
 Gulistan—389  
 Gunakeshi—167  
 Gyneolatory—453-55  
  
 Haihayas—93, 350, 399-401  
  
 Haji—290  
 Hajmau—290  
 Halayuda—438  
 Hanumana—172, 187, 260, 262,  
 292, 315, 405, 455, 502, 540,  
 551  
 Hara—505  
 Harappa Mohenjodaro—263  
 Hari—300, 344, 355, 375, 487,  
 563  
 Hari Gita—163, 210 346  
 Harimeihaha—66, 353  
 Harish Chandra—273, 300,  
 348, 464  
 Harishmashru—76  
 Harivamsa—23, 67, 193, 227,  
 282, 355, 367, 391-2, 559  
 Harrau—110  
 Harshabardhana—141, 394,  
 529  
 Harshasva—66  
 Hasti—375  
 Hayagraba—173, 194  
 Herakles—497  
 Hercules—43  
 Herodotus—248  
 Hidimba—356  
 Hundal Mirza—387  
 Hindus—190, 253, 260-1, 266,  
 284, 287, 300 309, 323,  
 330-32, 334, 340-1, 348-9,  
 352, 365 6, 377 334, 386-7,  
 390, 396, 405, 427, 429, 443,  
 463, 481, 483, 491, 497-501,  
 503, 526, 527, 530, 532, 538  
 Hippocrates—248  
 Hiranya Garbha—162, 342,  
 448, 462  
 Hiranyakashipu—13, 90, 132,  
 154, 184, 405  
 Hiranakshya—405  
 Homer—97, 323  
 Huen Tsang—233, 290, 529  
 Humayun—386  
 Hutashana—436  
 Huvishka—505  
 Hwai Sang—288  
  
 Ikshaku—69, 72, 117, 129,  
 159, 205, 230, 233, 271, 343,  
 345, 359, 423  
 Ila—67, 69-71, 84, 113, 167,  
 340, 376, 518  
 Illabaha—166-7  
 Illabala—167  
 Illabrita—167  
 Ilval—125, 406  
 Indra—10-13 26, 39, 47, 65,  
 67, 69, 71-2, 83 4, 86, 93,  
 96, 104, 109-10, 113-16, 121-2,  
 124-5, 129, 131, 135 6,  
 139-40, 147, 151, 157-8, 166-7,  
 169, 176, 185, 187 8, 210,  
 216-18, 225, 235-7, 246,  
 251, 267, 281-2, 302, 303,  
 313, 322, 325, 340, 344, 355,  
 358, 373-4, 379, 381, 392,  
 409-10 422-3, 435 443,  
 462 3, 465, 488, 471, 487,  
 503, 513, 518, 524, 536, 547,  
 554, 561-63, 565, 569, 577.  
  
 Indradyumna—302, 304 5  
 Indra Jayanti—353  
 Indrajit—115, 151, 157  
 Indrapramati—350  
 Indryota—203  
 Indumatī—418  
 Iranians—268  
 Ishtar—249  
 Islam—385  
 Itihasha—339-40, 402, 580  
 Itsing—210  
  
 Jadavas—230  
 Jadu—14  
 Jagadgauni—87  
 Jagannath—150, 263, 302,  
 304-06, 394, 504-06, 529  
 Jaguasani—452, 513  
 Jahangira—290, 387  
 Jahuu—69, 163, 203, 255, 280,  
 290, 398 9  
 Jahuu—255  
 Jaigisabya—50 201, 353  
 Jaimini—20, 123, 193, 250,  
 306, 352-54, 564  
 Jaimini Bharata—475  
 Jainas—290, 338, 365, 377  
 Jaja—274-5  
 Jajali—24 5, 275, 360  
 Jaksha—510  
 Jamabati—318  
 Jamadagni—75-6, 93, 115, 134,  
 193, 225, 240, 277, 399, 401  
 Janaka—93, 100, 106, 118, 133,  
 145, 148, 151, 183, 203-04,  
 256, 260, 271, 335, 347, 413,  
 445, 453, 474, 543, 567  
 Janardana—63, 247 8, 432,  
 484, 496  
 Janmejaya—26, 48, 53, 54, 101,  
 108, 124, 129, 143, 165, 167,  
 180-82, 184, 192 3, 202-04,  
 215, 231, 243, 256, 259, 271,  
 273, 276, 295, 302, 339, 341,  
 345, 349 50, 355, 372, 378,  
 383, 391 2, 413, 431-33,  
 463, 472, 559, 564 5, 567-8,  
 575, 580  
 Janmejaya II—201-03, 215,  
 567  
 Janmejaya III—391  
 -Janmejaya Parikshit—349  
 Janmastami—496  
 Jantu—64  
 Jara—263, 358, 506, 570  
 Jarasanda—114, 215, 243, 263,  
 296-300, 323 9, 373, 433, 438,  
 494, 498, 503, 514, 524, 543,  
 545  
 Jarat-Karu—26, 166-7  
 Jashoda—482, 512  
 Jataveda—468  
 Jatukarna—124  
 Jaya—161, 188, 375, 405, 565,  
 570  
 Jayadeva—336  
 Jayadratha—332, 356  
 Jayati—383, 461  
 Jeremiah—176  
 Jesus—176, 479

- Jara—219  
 Jāṭakavyāsa—2070  
 Jāṭaka—177  
 Jāṭakā—177  
 Jāṭaka—171  
 Jāṭaka—121  
 Jāṭaka—279  
 Jāṭakā—115  
 Jāṭaka—110, 171, 181, 187  
 Jāṭaka—110  
 Jāṭaka—110, 120, 117  
 Jāṭakā—110, 117  
 Jāṭaka—110, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

- Magas—299  
 Magha—376  
 Maghadas—132, 299  
 Mahabhartā—179-80, 184,  
 187-8, 190-1, 193-4, 198,  
 200-01, 204-11, 215 6, 223,  
 227-8, 230-1, 235-40,  
 242-45, 248-9, 251, 253, 259,  
 262, 264-5, 268, 272, 277,  
 281-2, 285-92, 294, 297,  
 302, 304, 306, 313-15,  
 317-19, 325, 329-30, 332,  
 335-42, 346-49, 351-53,  
 355 6, 358-61, 365-72, 374  
 —77, 379-81, 383-85,  
 387, 389-91, 397, 404-06,  
 411 413, 421, 423, 428, 430,  
 432-3, 436 7, 439, 444-48,  
 451, 453-55, 457, 459, 461,  
 463, 468, 471-74, 476, 488,  
 490, 496, 499, 504, 509, 517,  
 519, 524, 528 9, 531-2, 538,  
 541-43, 545 6, 548 552, 554,  
 556, 558-60, 564-68, 570,  
 572 44, 576-7, 579 80  
 Mahadeva—75, 193, 352, 375,  
 399, 466-7  
 Mahapurusha—216, 275  
 Mahasala Sounaka—272.  
 Mahatma—67  
 Mahavisa—14, 73, 318-9, 408,  
 440, 554  
 Maheshwara—74-5  
 Mahishamaradini—92  
 Mahmud—141  
 Maitradēvatās—466  
 Maitra Varuna—103  
 Maitreya—367, 439  
 Maitreya—80, 148, 149, 459  
 Malliyaban—116  
 Malwady—262  
 Mamata—15, 93, 120.  
 Manaar—262  
 Manasa—182  
 Manasirovara—262  
 Mandadori—397, 451, 461, 543,  
 551.  
 Mandapala—426  
 Mandbata—273  
 Mandhata—12, 66, 107, 114,  
 153, 159, 187, 383, 461  
 Mangal—128  
 Mankas—204  
 Man Singha—238, 337  
 Manu—41, 70, 84, 130-1, 134,  
 159, 211, 255, 271, 273, 279,  
 292, 296, 313, 341-2, 344-5,  
 360, 369-70 425, 434, 532  
 547, 558, 550  
 Manuki—39  
 Manu Samhita—162, 186,  
 282 3, 290, 369, 426  
 Markandeya—92, 120, 236,  
 282, 295, 304-5, 352, 360,  
 362, 423, 439  
 Markandeya Parana—435  
 Marichi—203, 301, 369, 466-7,  
 567.  
 Maru Devī—365  
 Maruts—271 278, 331  
 Maruttee—66, 112, 129, 133,  
 137, 151, 273, 345, 360, 400  
 Matali—167  
 Matarisvan—422  
 Matinara—276  
 Matryas—132  
 Matsyas—132, 185, 263, 284,  
 373  
 Matsya Purana—225, 282  
 Matsya Sammadā—136  
 Maunas—204  
 Maya—92, 148, 184, 303, 383,  
 416, 434  
 Maya Danaba—353  
 Medhatithi—115  
 Megasthenes—497  
 Meghduta—493  
 Meghnada—9, 230, 358, 384,  
 502, 551  
 Meru Savarni—518  
 Mirza Nur-uddin Muhammad  
 —337  
 Mitakshara—369-70  
 Mitanniāns—110  
 Mithi—130, 375  
 Mittra—72, 83, 108-10, 127,  
 185, 198-9 217 8, 229,  
 337, 340, 422.  
 Mitrasaka—273  
 Mitra Suhata—67  
 Moghul—387, 554  
 Mohenjo daro—269  
 Moksha—161  
 Moon—185, 464, 470  
 Moyo—243  
 Mrityu—219 20, 222, 379, 451  
 Muchukunda—61, 107, 274  
 Mudgal—535.  
 Mujavats—132  
 Mundas—130  
 Mundakas—425  
 Nabhaga—66, 273, 282, 383.  
 Nabhagaristha—282  
 Nabhi—358, 365  
 Nachiketa—101  
 Nagas—123 135, 167, 180, 202,  
 215, 224, 256, 266, 289, 294,  
 350, 547  
 Nahusa—13, 22, 39, 49, 66, 71,  
 97, 104, 117, 122-3, 136,  
 138, 184, 195, 201, 203, 225 6,  
 232-3, 256-7, 273, 277, 240,  
 408, 554, 560-65.  
 Naimisharanya—175, 200,  
 202 3, 209, 271, 349, 353,  
 455, 391 2, 546, 559  
 Naisardha—394  
 Nakshatras—83  
 Nakula—43, 68, 192, 419, 439,  
 455, 508, 518, 563, 577-79  
 Nala—9, 135, 245, 312, 345,  
 445-6, 447  
 Namuchi—39, 115, 373.  
 Nanda—482, 491, 506, 512  
 Napat—267  
 Nara—85, 91, 95, 116, 137,  
 167-83, 184, 313, 316 7,  
 342, 344, 351, 355, 479, 486,  
 563  
 Nara Narayana—210, 227  
 Narada—8, 9, 12, 20, 23-24,  
 31, 33, 60, 62, 61, 75, 95,  
 114, 116, 133, 143, 147, 153,  
 155, 163, 166, 172, 174-5,  
 184, 191, 193, 196, 236, 240,  
 246, 275, 292, 299, 302, 322,  
 342 3, 345-48, 353, 359,  
 367-8, 375, 380, 432, 439,  
 459, 463, 471-73, 475, 490,  
 518, 547, 553, 567, 574.  
 Narmadha—69, 215.  
 Narasinghadeb—92, 184  
 Narayana—8, 11-15, 21, 25—  
 27, 29, 31, 33, 37, 47-52, 61-2,  
 65 67, 76, 83, 85, 91-2, 96,  
 113-4, 116, 119-20, 125 129,  
 193-4, 137, 139 40, 141, 144,  
 153, 156, 158, 159-63 166—  
 69, 171-77, 179 181-2, 184  
 —89, 193 4, 213, 216-7, 225-  
 6, 233, 266, 275, 292, 302,  
 303, 312-3, 316, 325, 332 3,  
 343-4, 346-7, 351-53, 353,  
 360, 365, 371-73, 375 379—  
 81, 333, 394, 398 405, 413,  
 431, 463, 469, 471, 473, 475,  
 479, 483-4, 486, 503, 505, 526,  
 558, 567-8, 570  
 Narottama—161, 189  
 Nasatyan—110  
 Nature—80, 254, 257  
 Natyacastra—251  
 Navavastva—131  
 Naya philosophy—123, 330,  
 449  
 Nigamas—426  
 Nilkantha—71, 136, 159 60,  
 228, 230, 241, 244-5, 357,  
 369, 371, 452.  
 Nimi—72 119, 133, 175, 203,  
 273, 317  
 Nishadaa—64, 135, 313, 410,  
 435-6  
 Nizam—529  
 Noah—301  
 Nrga—273  
 Nriga—68, 305, 382  
 Nrigangu—115  
 Nrsingha Deva—13, 154, 184-  
 5, 194  
 Oghabati—410  
 Osiris—85  
 Paila—123, 193 250, 353-4  
 Paippaladas—351  
 Pala Dynasty—29  
 Panchacika—145, 377.  
 Panchakedar—447  
 Panchalas—203, 230-1, 244,  
 276, 284, 339, 432, 472-3, 523  
 Panchali—139-40, 452, 536.  
 Pancharatra—343.  
 Panchatantra—393  
 Pancharvinsa Brahmana—123,  
 157, 422, 434  
 Pandavas—137 8, 141, 163, 184,  
 192, 202, 207, 212, 214, 216,  
 224, 229, 231, 234-5, 237,  
 241, 243, 258, 263-4, 278,  
 282, 288 293, 297, 302-3,  
 305, 308-9, 312-17, 322,  
 326, 328-32, 338 341, 345,  
 350, 353, 356, 358, 373-75,



- 377 8, 381, 399, 410,  
114-5, 118, 120-1, 423, 426,  
428, 430-31, 436-40 412 3,  
447, 449 50, 452-55, 473, 175,  
482, 484-86, 488, 490, 491-  
96, 493-00, 503, 507 8, 510-  
13, 517-21, 523 4, 527 8,  
530-32, 534-40, 541, 516,  
549 50, 553-4, 556-59,  
563-9 572-81
- Pandu-41, 147, 192, 229 30,  
232, 234 5, 237, 242, 247,  
258, 263, 286, 288, 291, 299,  
309, 312 3, 319, 346-48,  
350, 379, 404, 406, 408, 428,  
432, 435, 438, 446, 457, 508,  
505 570 7, 579
- Pandu Kesava-205
- Panini-196, 339 40, 351, 461
- Panisi-118
- Paracheta-347
- Paranesthi-235
- Parnahara-8, 29, 30, 74 5,  
95, 108, 118, 121, 135, 161,  
193 202, 350-52, 368 7,  
400 410, 423, 461, 475, 565
- Parasurama-14, 40, 43, 50,  
53, 94, 114 5 131, 139, 156,  
184 5, 225, 237, 240, 249,  
255-57, 262, 273-4, 304,  
313, 345, 352, 383, 393-9,  
401, 403 405, 403, 431, 448,  
451, 469, 471, 561-5
- Paravasu-399, 400
- Parikshit-26, 194, 201, 203,  
240, 302, 339, 332, 391, 403,  
410, 423-26, 494, 496, 516,  
559, 564-5, 537
- Parikshit II-203
- Parjanya-151
- Parasanth-290, 365
- Partha-229, 410
- Parthia-501
- Parushni-133
- Parvata-75
- Parvati-130, 251, 310, 313,  
384, 504, 551
- Pascal-42
- Pasupati-139, 188, 467.
- Patanjali-295, 413
- Patanjali-292, 308, 503, 505,  
566, 567.
- Paulama-35, 131-5, 225, 546
- Pansya-202
- Pavana-466, 536
- Payasya-467
- Pharaoh-105
- Philosophy-106, 398, 443
- Pir-1-2
- Pisistratus-341
- Pitriyajna-95, 186, 218 9,  
271, 304, 353
- Plato-306
- Plutarch-42
- Pluto-440, 450
- Poru-205 6, 233 9, 276, 389
- Pracetasa Bhargava-401
- Prachetas-360, 409
- Prachune Garbha-347
- Prachinta-276
- Pradveshi-256
- Prahlada-39, 47, 184.
- Prajapati-84, 106, 103 9,  
193, 217, 323, 343, 349, 375,  
432 415, 462, 466 7
- Pramadbara-105, 311
- Pramati-559
- Pramuchi-115
- Prasenajit-274
- Pratardan-93, 273, 399, 400
- Pratipa-14, 44, 63, 74, 233,  
349, 359
- Pratividyay-350, 536-7
- Pravahana-200
- Pravaras-204, 350
- Pravarasena II-233
- Prishata-229, 274, 517
- Paitha-192, 232, 237, 246, 375,  
433, 440
- Prithu-59, 159, 198, 250, 359,  
361, 379, 410, 425
- Prithu Sutas-410
- Promothi-131
- Prostoka-294
- Pradhra-134
- Prithur-273
- Pulaha-567
- Pulastya-49, 114, 133-4, 187,  
341, 567
- Puloma-180
- Pundarikashka-173
- Pundarika Nag-120 3
- Purana-116, 172, 179, 202,  
204 5, 224-5, 227, 240,  
250, 261, 274, 281, 299, 306,  
313, 332, 335 339-42, 345,  
348, 374, 395 6, 363, 375,  
382-84, 398, 402, 405, 456,  
461, 463 4, 472, 479, 500, 501,  
564 580
- Purana Masha-99, 559
- Puroraba-23, 43, 67 8, 72 85,  
133, 138, 159, 230, 347, 448,  
518, 563
- Puru-14, 203 232-3 274,  
276, 302, 358 9, 398, 400
- Purushottama-306
- Puskala-71, 277
- Putana-182, 482, 556
- Pyramid-255, 267
- Pythagoras-185, 243, 306
- Radha-229, 313, 417, 455, 463,  
483, 487 491, 497, 499, 502-3  
503, 527-8, 538
- Radha Gohinda-503
- Raghu-204, 540, 558
- Raghubansa-394, 418
- Raghunandan-296
- Raviya-399
- Raja Behari Mall-383, 387
- Rajas-399
- Raja Suja-66 7, 107 8, 193,  
215, 243, 329, 354, 356,  
366 7, 413, 430, 433, 487,  
495, 498, 523 4, 536, 545,  
557
- Rajatarangini-289
- Rajendradeva Parakesariva  
man-306 7
- Rajputs-206 7, 554
- Rakhasas-106 7, 135, 137,  
182, 205, 279, 343, 348, 395,  
410, 459, 461, 530, 561
- Rama-3, 12, 42, 66-7, 71, 76 6,  
81, 83, 93 4, 108, 114-16,  
118, 125, 134, 136-38, 151,  
153, 156, 158, 168, 171-2,  
183-85, 187-8, 201, 216, 225,  
229 30, 235 6, 238, 240,  
245, 251, 256, 269-1, 265,  
273 277, 279, 294, 238-9,  
301, 312, 315, 324, 332, 340,  
343-45, 356, 358, 369, 371,  
373, 383 4, 370 399-01,  
404-07, 414, 418,  
430 1, 444, 448, 452 453,  
465, 469-72, 474-78, 478,  
487, 499, 502-05, 510,  
517-19, 540 1, 543-46,  
547, 549-51, 558, 560, 563,  
564 5
- Ramanuja-390
- Rama Upanishad-172
- Ramayana-103, 112, 114,  
116-18, 128, 136, 146-7,  
149, 151-2, 155, 157-8, 163,  
168 9, 171-2, 179, 183 4,  
187, 189, 201, 203, 209, 216,  
223 225, 230, 235 6, 240,  
245-6, 256, 259-62, 265,  
271-2, 277, 279, 289, 298,  
306, 314-5, 318, 329 30, 335,  
338-44, 347, 349, 358, 361,  
365, 367 371, 371, 376, 382,  
384, 387, 389 90, 392,  
404-06, 414-5, 465, 455,  
459-60, 471-76, 499, 504 533,  
539-41, 513 545 6,  
548-50, 552, 554, 558-60,  
563 4, 566-7, 576
- Rambha-154
- Raphael-483
- Ranti Deva-66 27, 345, 362
- Rasa-151.
- Rashila-494, 496
- Rati-418
- Rathilana-205
- Ravana-3, 12, 48, 75-6,  
114-16, 118, 125, 133-4,  
139-38, 151, 153 4, 157,  
168 171 187 8 225-6,  
230 235, 258 260-62, 272,  
324 332, 344, 347, 358,  
373 405-07, 414, 433,  
444 461 469 70 473-76  
502 539 40, 543, 545  
550 1. 556, 565, 578
- Reika-134, 277, 401
- Renuka-401
- Richika-399
- Rigveda-95, 102 105, 107 8,  
113 4, 125-28 130 134 5,  
137 8 147, 169 70, 177, 183,  
196 7, 199, 204-5, 209, 216,  
253, 258 272, 274, 279,  
234 5, 289, 323, 333, 348,  
351-2, 355 361 422, 462,  
468, 471, 524, 546, 566
- Rikshavat-400
- Rishyanukramani-124, 392
- Rishyasringa-129-30, 265,  
271 279, 296 304, 368
- Ritwija Dvaipayana-383
- Rohita-464
- Rohitasa-300,

- Romaharsa—363  
 Romaharsana—201, 250,  
 354-5, 391  
 Romans—334  
 Romapada—204  
 Romis—301  
 Rsabha—273  
 Rsisena—205  
 Rudra—11—13, 20, 33 4, 119,  
 139, 179, 186, 183, 215, 302,  
 465—67, 567  
 Rudrasena—505  
 Rukmini—453  
 Ruru—105, 311, 559
- Sabitri—3, 42, 173, 230, 350,  
 417, 427, 452  
 Sabya—429  
 Sachu—122, 232, 410, 436  
 Sagra—44 68 9, 95, 101  
 140, 163—65, 186, 255,  
 260, 273, 230, 286, 301, 303,  
 310, 366, 401, 563  
 Sagora Nimi—66  
 Sahadeva—43, 63, 192, 419,  
 419 455, 508, 518, 563,  
 577—79  
 Sahasrajit—274  
 Saiva—520  
 Saivas—214, 504  
 Saivya—345-6  
 Sakalya—184, 391  
 Sakra—436  
 Saktas—214, 504  
 Sakti—72, 210, 330 1 372  
 Sakuni—230-1, 234-5 243,  
 314, 347, 375, 502, 517, 548-9  
 Sakuntala—70, 276, 318, 320,  
 322, 323, 335, 339, 365, 394,  
 410, 418, 448, 498, 560  
 Sakya—263  
 Sata—194, 214  
 Salankayanas—461, 475  
 Salirahana—294, 294  
 Salva—114, 235-7 243, 356,  
 378, 404  
 Samanta Panchak—393  
 Samantu—250  
 Samavedas—102, 120, 128, 137,  
 196, 199, 352, 459, 566  
 Samayacharika Sutras—370  
 Samba—293  
 Sambara—132, 204, 463  
 Sambarana—66, 193, 205, 227,  
 276, 350, 547  
 Sambarta—56, 107 120, 137,  
 467  
 Sambhu—518  
 Sambuka—340  
 Samkha—50, 153  
 Samkhachura—451  
 Samkhya Philosophy—413,  
 419, 453, 471 491  
 Samkriti—232  
 Samsapayana—250  
 Samt Kumar—53, 133, 139,  
 196 213, 236, 347, 353 463,  
 558, 567  
 sanat Sujata—54, 567  
 Sandili—50  
 Sandipon—449
- Sanjaya—76, 157-8, 231,  
 237, 246, 345 6, 359, 368,  
 378, 384-5, 406, 413, 493,  
 567 8  
 Sankara—340  
 Sankaracharya—146 154, 159,  
 390, 571  
 Sankrtya—273  
 Santa—271  
 Santanu—14, 73, 136, 163, 203,  
 232, 239—42, 263, 313, 318,  
 343, 350, 359, 448, 463, 472,  
 554, 559, 567, 576  
 Santhals—259, 303  
 Saradwata—63  
 Sarama—151, 182  
 Sarangi—426  
 Saranyu—462  
 Sarasvata—59, 347  
 Saraswati—69, 113, 126, 133,  
 141, 156, 161 164, 167-8,  
 182, 187 189, 255, 276, 283-4,  
 354, 370 405, 463, 497,  
 547, 561, 567  
 Sargon—249  
 Sarjati—108, 134, 152, 277, 345,  
 463, 475  
 Sarmistha—14, 215, 376  
 Sarvabhauma—204  
 Sarvanukrama—355  
 Sasabindh—66, 71 2, 273, 345,  
 332  
 Sasthi—181-2, 306  
 Satadyumna—273  
 Satan—332, 402, 551  
 Satananda—93  
 Satanuka—124, 355 6, 391-2,  
 568  
 Sathapatha Brahmana—118, 119,  
 125, 148, 203, 205, 208, 351,  
 354, 371, 413, 445, 566 7  
 Sati—130  
 Satrugana—261, 277, 344, 371  
 Sattwata—353  
 Satvata—277  
 Satyaban—417  
 Satyabati—136, 230, 277, 341,  
 382, 399, 423, 443, 461, 576,  
 580  
 Satyabhama—453, 499, 569  
 Satyabrata—301  
 Satyaki—68, 356, 411  
 Satya Narayana—182  
 Satyasandha—273  
 Saudasa, 72, 201—04.  
 Saul—176  
 Saumitri—157  
 Saunahotra—124, 355, 392  
 Saunaka—17, 23, 116, 124, 128,  
 149, 162, 175, 184, 199, 201—73,  
 205, 209, 223, 245, 341, 353,  
 355 6, 373, 390—2, 394, 401,  
 474, 546, 559, 564, 567-8, 580  
 Saundilyana—475  
 Saunika—276  
 Saunika—567  
 Sauti—17, 116, 149, 201-02,  
 223 314, 341, 349, 378, 390,  
 393, 467, 554, 564, 567  
 Savana—462, 467  
 Savarni—250
- Savayasuchi—68, 247  
 Savetasa—204  
 Sayana—204, 463.  
 Senajit—204, 567  
 Shabars—64, 509  
 Shadgurushya—355  
 Shakru—236, 343  
 Shamash—249  
 Shanta—129 30  
 Sharmistha—135, 293  
 Shen Tamil—163  
 Shikhandi—115, 229, 237, 356,  
 404, 522  
 Shrutashravas—76  
 Shuka—30, 193  
 Siddhantas—124  
 Silara—369  
 Singhabahini—92  
 Singhabahu—59, 261, 297  
 Singyan—288  
 Siapala—57, 114, 215 324,  
 373, 483, 488, 494-5 498, 502,  
 543, 556, 570  
 Sita—42, 88, 90, 93, 114, 133-4,  
 136—33, 151, 153, 169 171,  
 183, 187—89, 204, 229 30,  
 237, 256, 259—61 271, 293,  
 312, 315-6, 318, 332, 344, 347,  
 365, 373, 384, 406, 416—8,  
 427, 429—31, 433, 444—46,  
 448, 452-3, 455-6, 472, 476,  
 478, 503, 505, 533, 539—41,  
 543-4, 547, 550 1, 578  
 Siva—25 30, 32—34 52, 67,  
 71, 73 4, 94, 104 5, 182, 134,  
 139, 141, 145, 147, 153 3,  
 182, 184, 188, 240, '51—  
 56, 260, 289, 306, 308, 310,  
 312 3, 322, 332, 353 379,  
 384, 418, 431, 445, 447, 459,  
 461, 475 497, 504, 526, 551,  
 562, 569-70  
 Siva Chandra Sekhara—260  
 Sivi—66, 273, 362, 400, 411,  
 571  
 Sivi Ausivara—273  
 Socratis—176, 243, 306, 420  
 Solomon—239  
 Soma—67, 113, 222, 232, 422,  
 434, 547  
 Somaka—64-5, 273  
 Soubhal Sing Chowana—241  
 Soubhari Samhita—358  
 Sravan—298  
 Sri—379  
 Srikrishna—14, 40, 67-8, 76,  
 94, 113 4, 133, 156, 158,  
 162 163, 179 182, 184 5,  
 192 3 214-5, 227—30, 234-  
 5 237, 241, 244 248-7,  
 257, 262, 277, 293—300,  
 307, 306, 311, 313—17,  
 322, 324—26 328—37, 337,  
 340, 344, 346 7, 350, 356,  
 359, 365, 369 373—75, 383 4  
 394-5, 402—06 411—16, 427,  
 431—35, 437, 439-40, 442, 445,  
 448—51, 453—55, 460, 471,  
 478—88, 490—07, 510, 512,  
 520, 523-4, 527—29, 533-4,  
 536, 538, 541—43, 545—47,

- 549, 552, 554, 556, 7, 560,  
562 567-70, 573, 575,  
577 8  
Srimad Bhagawat-162, 230,  
493-4, 493  
Srīngi-567.  
Srīngiya-191, 345, 359  
Srtotisena-401  
Srujaya-404  
Srutaya-257  
Srutotoba-122  
Sthanu-129  
Subahu-277, 371  
Subhadra-63, 240, 301, 305,  
315, 322, 350, 354, 331, 413,  
427, 433, 453, 450, 495, 499,  
504-66, 503, 529, 533, 571  
Suchi Urya-467  
Sudasa-205, 337, 359, 40  
Sudasa Parjavana-227  
Sudarshana-292, 300, 333,  
397, 410-1, 510  
Sudhanwan-467  
Sudra-94, 102, 106, 131, 138,  
143, 232, 265, 301, 333, 409,  
423, 455, 487, 500  
Sudyumana-274, 493  
Sugriva-126, 349, 405, 502,  
526  
Suhotra-273, 345  
Suka-136, 191, 210, 2-6, 316,  
348, 352 3, 375, 439, 475,  
495, 567  
Suka kriti-276  
Sukra-12, 43, 75, 107, 128,  
167, 185, 206, 233, 261, 277,  
319, 360, 417, 467, 472, 506  
Sukracharya-54, 295  
Sukra-Havirgha-134,  
Sukanya-131, 152, 277  
Sulava-20, 115, 148-9, 377,  
453  
Sumanta-128, 193, 352-51  
Sumitra-167 8  
Sumukha-115, 167  
Sun-85, 104, 107, 110, 167,  
173, 185, 205, 276, 303,  
311 4, 322, 358, 440, 453,  
462, 464, 470, 517, 569  
Sunaka-455  
Sunahshepa-335, 344, 464  
Sunda-329, 406, 432, 455, 526  
Sungha-351  
Sunita-379  
Supratika-215, 370 1  
Surasena-277  
Sushabhana-424  
Susruta-293  
Suvala-232  
Surya-71, 130, 222, 299, 309-  
10, 343  
Suryati-277  
Sutlambe-139  
Suyodhana-275  
Svaha-181.  
Svastyatraya-115  
Sveta-52  
Svetaketu-285  
Swayambhava-12-3, 24, 31,  
95, 101, 159-60, 163, 211,  
252, 301, 369, 567  
Svetaketu-101, 180, 200, 369,  
434.  
Syuma Razhmi-96 7, 145, 164  
Taksa-277, 294  
Takshaka-71, 167, 180, 202,  
276, 294  
Tajjagha-93  
Tamasa-209, 298  
Tamar Muni-163  
Tandi-35  
Tandya-75, 475  
Tapa-224  
Tapati-205, 547  
Tara-303 365, 397, 451, 643  
Tarakasura-465  
Tarikh i-Badauni-387  
Tartas-264  
Thaba-206  
Tholka-painir-168  
Tiamat-90  
Tilottama-329, 406, 432, 455,  
526, 575  
Tittiri-391  
Trayambaka-74  
Treta Yuga-265, 313, 513, 547  
Trinabindu-134 4  
Trishira-107, 140  
Trita-383, 567  
Tritus-132, 205  
Trojan War-216  
Tuladhara-24 5, 275, 282, 360  
Tulsi-151  
Tulsidas-330  
Turasu-205, 399  
Tvastr-97, 113-4, 140  
Ucinaras-132  
Uddalaka Aruni-101, 165,  
199 00, 335, 360, 397, 411.  
Ugra-467.  
Ugrasena-277, 329, 482  
Ugrasrava-371  
Ugrasravas-124, 341, 355,  
392  
Ulu-331, 574 5  
Uma-11, 71-75, 393, 418,  
431, 526  
Upajaya-274 5  
Upajaya-565  
Upamanya-35, 101, 218, 359,  
568 7  
Upamishads-101-2, 107, 141,  
155, 160, 164-5, 184, 191,  
196, 200, 203, 265, 289,  
323 339, 343, 345 6, 343,  
354, 368, 334, 398, 405, 445,  
453, 459, 461, 463, 472, 480-1  
500, 502-3, 543, 552, 563,  
571  
Uparichara-22, 31, 65, 119,  
181 204, 251-2, 256, 278,  
410, 567, 571  
Uparichara Basu-299, 353  
Upasunda-329, 406, 432, 455,  
526  
Urbasi-68, 72, 133, 241, 251,  
235, 340, 359, 422, 440, 448,  
563  
Usana-115  
Ushanas-75, 226, 351, 360,  
467.  
Ushanas Sukra-134  
Ushinara-362, 429  
Utanka-118, 126, 179 80,  
202, 212, 335, 417, 468, 507,  
547, 565, 569  
Utathva-164  
Utathya-15, 120, 467.  
Vabrious Soramus-103  
Vagadatta-356  
Vagiratha-383  
Vahu-369  
Vahudantaka-379  
Vainya-58, 273  
Vaisala-130  
Vaishalaksha-379  
Vaishampayana-123, 192 3  
231, 236, 239, 243, 250,  
276, 302-05, 310, 318-9,  
341, 346, 349, 352 3, 355,  
355, 368, 390 1 405, 413,  
417, 445, 484, 507, 559, 564,  
566-7, 580  
Vaishaparan-233  
Vaishavana-66, 382, 451  
Vaishava-214, 406, 483, 604,  
Vaizya-39, 94, 102, 106, 131,  
279-82, 364, 393, 400, 409-10  
123, 425 6, 467, 506, 536,  
566  
Vaitalikas-368  
Vaithabya-204  
Vaivasvatha-85, 195, 301.  
Vajrasirahan-467  
Vala-126.  
Valadeva-438  
Valakashwa-399  
Valhaka-345.  
Valhika-233  
Valmiki-18 37, 74, 81, 168,  
123-4, 127 8, 133 4, 136 7,  
147, 152 3, 155, 163, 197, 206,  
209, 225 6, 247-8, 265, 293,  
293, 323, 339, 339, 338-3, 342,  
344, 347, 349, 351, 382, 383,  
402, 404-06, 410, 418, 460-1,  
463, 472, 475 6, 503, 542,  
517-8, 550, 555, 558 9, 564,  
566, 570 1  
Varanavata-518  
Vareci-204.  
Varhaspatya-379  
Varuna-29, 103-10, 112,  
126-7, 140, 169, 186, 193 9,  
216-18, 229, 235, 266, 340,  
383, 337, 422, 465-67, 518  
Vasava-229, 608, 515  
Vasatha-11, 22, 31, 58, 72 3,  
75, 84, 88, 93, 100, 108-08,  
112, 115, 117-19, 124,  
129-32, 139, 147, 169, 193,  
203, 205 6, 210, 214, 227,  
236, 240, 253, 265, 275 6,  
335, 337, 349, 342, 350 1,  
383, 391, 402, 422, 476, 483,  
445, 447 8, 465, 475, 560,  
565, 567  
Vasistha Mitrayu-250  
Vasu-341, 338, 580  
Vasudeva-35, 162-3, 202,  
224, 232, 243, 314, 340, 344,



